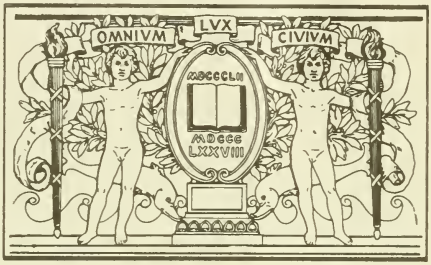
THE AMERICAN

-MARY-
DILLON



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THE AMERICAN

"Good-night, Helen," he said

THE AMERICAN

BY

MARY DILLON

AUTHOR OF "COMRADES," "MISS LIVINGSTON'S COMPANION," "ROSE OF OLD ST. LOUIS," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
R. M. BRINKERHOFF

NEW YORK
THE CENTURY CO.
1919

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Published, March, 1919

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TO

THE THREE SISTERS:

E. McM. C., M. D. C., M. L. C.

"GOD BLESS 'EM!"

Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink to thee across the flood,
We know thee most, we love thee best,
For art thou not of British blood?
Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great name of England, round and round.

O rise, our strong Atlantic sons,
When war against our freedom springs!
O speak to Europe through your guns!
They CAN be understood by kings.
You must not mix our Queen with those
That wish to keep their people fools;
Our freedom's foemen are her foes,
She comprehends the race she rules.
Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our dear kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great cause of Freedom, round and round.

— TENNYSON (1852).

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Reddy Resartus	3
II	Sergeant Casey Eats His Hat	14
III	The Dean of the Yard	26
IV	Old-Time Times	41
V	"Good-Night, Miss Seymour"	54
VI	Sergeant Casey Winks	62
VII	Reddy Makes a Get-Away	70
VIII	Great News!	81
IX	Ted Decides	89
X	Private Jarvis	104
XI	Reddy Returns	122
XII	Reddy Recruiting	135
XIII	Reddy? Peter? Pierre?	140
XIV	A Man of Mettle	151
XV	Reddy's Lieutenant	165
XVI	The Crossing	179
XVII	In the Fog	192
XVIII	At the Base Hospital	204
XIX	Ted and Reddy Shake Hands	219
XX	The Juvigny Plateau	231
XXI	On the Playground	244
XXII	"Cousin Pierre"	260
XXIII	The Red Sweet Wine of Youth	278
XXIV	Our Heritage	291

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"Good-night, Helen," he said ..... *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"Reddy, dear," she said quietly, "it's not so bad as all that" 72

He carried him as he would have carried a child..... 284

"We are seeing the dawn of a new day, Ted," said Helen ... 296

THE AMERICAN

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CHAPTER I

REDDY RESARTUS

NO wonder it was called Sunshine House. The warm southern sun streamed in at the windows of the cozy office, almost putting out the leaping flames from the glowing soft-coal fire in the grate, and turned Miss Seymour's wavy crown of auburn hair into red gold as she bent over her desk.

Miss Seymour was Head Resident at the settlement and her black dress with its white bands at neck and wrists was as much of a protection in that lawless district as a policeman's uniform itself. More, for the reckless small boy, bent on mischief, might glory in getting the better of a policeman, but there was no one, even the most abandoned criminal, in a radius of twenty blocks who would have thought of harming one of Miss Seymour's beautiful hairs, or who would not have instantly constituted himself her body-guard had any danger threatened.

The office was a small room, but it opened by a wide arch into a very large one, whose walls were lined with books and whose floor space was crossed by tables piled with magazines and papers and circled by chairs. In a wide bay-window, a very trap to catch sunbeams as the

morning rays poured into it on all sides, was a smaller table surrounded by less formal chairs than surrounded the other tables; and on one of these chairs was seated a youth, buried in the thrilling pages of a boy's magazine, whose mop of curly hair was a brilliant caricature of Miss Seymour's.

It was a quiet hour at the settlement. Not a sound disturbed the writer in one room or the reader in the other until a burly policeman came puffing and panting up the entrance steps and stopped at the office door. At the first sound of the sergeant's heavy tread Miss Seymour had glanced involuntarily, with an anxious frown, toward the library; and though she could not see the reader in the bay-window, there had come, also at that first sound, a quick call: "All right, Miss Seymour," and the reader had vanished.

Miss Seymour turned to greet her visitor with a bright smile and a pleasant, "Good-morning, Sergeant."

"Mornin', Miss," said the sergeant, doffing his cap respectfully and still blowing a little from his hurried ascent of the settlement steps.

"Yer sent fur me, I heerd. Anny o' the Gang bin botherin' yeh?"

"Oh, no! I sent for you to have a little talk with you. Won't you come in and sit down?" And Miss Seymour's smile this time was so bewilderingly friendly that the sergeant felt small, unaccustomed palpitations in the region lying just below his shining star. Miss Seymour's "come in" meant come inside the railing which fenced off a space big enough for her desk, a chair or two, and the glowing grate fire.

"No, ma'am," said the sergeant, politely, "I 'll jest

stan' outside loike. It 's about them reskals ye want to talk, I 'll be bound."

"Yes, it 's the DeBolivar Street Gang; you 've guessed it, Sergeant," she answered, with another bewildering smile.

The name of the street was DeBallivière; for the settlement was in the old French quarter. But out of courtesy to the sergeant Miss Seymour gave it the pronunciation prevailing in the district.

"I knowed it!" and the sergeant glowed with triumph, for "The Gang" was the one bone of contention between him and the Head Resident, for whom Sergeant Casey entertained the most profound respect and admiration. "What 's thim varmints bin doin' now?"

"Nothing at all. But I heard you suspected some of them, or all of them, of having a hand in that automobile stealing last night, and I wanted to ask you not to run any of them in till you were sure. Reddy Paschal does n't think it was any of them, and he ought to know."

"Who 's Reddy Paschal? Is he that carrot-topped leader o' the Gang?"

Miss Seymour nodded.

"He 's the warst o' the bunch. I would n't believe him on oath, not if he swore an alley-boy fur ivery wan o' thim."

"You 're wrong, Sergeant. I 'd take Reddy's simple word quicker than many a man's oath. He 's no liar!"

Miss Seymour spoke with heightened color, in a voice a little raised beyond its quiet modulations. Also, there was something a little like a flash of indignation in the gray eyes that had smiled so bewilderingly on the ser-

geant. The sergeant was cowed, and he replied meekly:

"P'raps yer right, ma'am; p'raps Reddy ain't no liar; but all the same I 'd be willin' to bet it was some o' the Gang as stole the Smith auto."

It was far from Miss Seymour's desire to cow the policeman; indeed, it was her deliberate purpose to win him—bewitch him, if necessary—and again she flashed on him that bewildering smile that he had neither experience to ignore nor armor to withstand.

"But promise me not to run any of them in, won't you, Sergeant, until you get proof? You know we have just started in to see what we can do with the Gang, and we don't want our work spoiled."

"Reformin' thim, is it, Miss? Yer jest wastin' yer toime an' breath. We 've bin afther that gang for three years, an' we cain't neither reform 'em nor break 'em up."

"I know; it 's a hard proposition, but give me six weeks. If you keep your hands off for six weeks, and if by that time we have n't broken up the Gang, I won't ask any more favors for them."

"Does yeh mean not run 'em in ef they do annythin'?"

The sergeant looked puzzled. He would like to oblige Miss Seymour, but that was asking a little too much.

"Oh, of course, if they 're caught red-handed! But don't wish all the crime of the district on to them, until you can get some real proof."

The sergeant thought a minute. It was not the usual tactics of "the force" in that district. Let highway robbery or motor-car theft be the crime, the first step toward justice was always to arrest any member of the De

Bolivar Street Gang not sufficiently wily to keep out of the clutches of the police. He was not quite sure he would be perfectly within his rights in granting such a request; but as he hesitated he glanced up at Miss Seymour from the cap he was awkwardly twirling in his hands, and was lost. Another of those slow, bewildering smiles in the dark-lashed gray eyes dazzled him and utterly routed the last vestige of his moral stamina.

"All roight, Miss," he said briskly, and beaming all over his broad red face in response to the smile. "All roight. I 'll give yeh a free hand as fur as I kin, but if yeh break up the DeBolivar Street Gang in six weeks, I 'll eat me hat."

Miss Seymour waited until Sergeant Casey's heavy tread had left the last step and was ponderously echoing from the pavement below; then she called softly:

"Reddy!"

There was a faint rustling from some invisible corner, but no other response until she called a second time. Then, slowly, a gloomy light in his blue eyes, usually dancing with a daredevil glee, Reddy came around the jutting side of the wide arch, into the office.

"Well, Reddy, did you hear what the sergeant said?" Miss Seymour asked pleasantly.

"Yes'm," answered Reddy, surlily.

"Why, what 's the matter, Reddy? I thought you would be pleased that you are to have a fair chance at last."

" 'T ain't him as is givin' us our chanst," persisted Reddy, still moodily. "I ain't sayin', 'Thank yeh, sir,' to no cop."

"But it is something to be grateful for that you 're not to be run in on every slightest suspicion. What is the matter with you, Reddy?"

"I 'm mad."

"Why?"

"Jes' coz *he* cain't break up the Gang, he tinks *you* cain't."

Miss Seymour was taken aback. This was not at all the answer she had expected from Reddy. For a moment she was puzzled; then that bewildering smile that had so warmed the cockles of the sergeant's heart flashed on Reddy and warmed his, also.

"So, Reddy, you think *I* can break it up?"

"O' course!" said Reddy, laconically.

"I believe I can, with your help. Have you ever had a job, Reddy?"

Reddy was bewildered by what he considered the sudden transition of subject.

"No 'm," he answered slowly.

"Well, our first step, then, in breaking up the Gang is to get you a job."

Miss Seymour spoke pleasantly but with a finality Reddy could not misunderstand.

"But—but—I don't loike wurruk!" he gasped.

"How do you know, if you 've never tried it?"

"I dunno, but I jes' don't loike the looks uv it."

"Reddy, do you remember your promise?"

"Yes 'm." Reddy's blue eyes twinkled as he looked Miss Seymour squarely in the face. "I said I would n't take a drink fur a month, an' I hain't, nuther."

"That 's fine! I 'm sure you have n't! But you know very well that was n't all your promise."

Reddy looked down sheepishly at the disreputable excuse for a cap he was twirling awkwardly, much as Sergeant Casey had twirled his smart blue one a few minutes before. He did not answer.

"Reddy!" Miss Seymour admonished.

"I promised yer I 'd do wat yer axed me." Reddy spoke haltingly, without looking up.

"And now, this is the first thing I 've asked you. Will you go to work?"

It was a full minute before Reddy looked up and answered with determination:

"I *will!* S'elp me Mike!"

It was one of the things Miss Seymour liked in Reddy; he did not make easy promises, but when he made them he could be relied upon to keep them.

"Thank you, Reddy," she said simply. "Can you run an automobile?"

Reddy looked up, startled. Was this a trap Miss Seymour was setting for him? But there was nothing in Miss Seymour's face but plain waiting for an answer to a plain question.

"Yes 'm," he said sheepishly.

This time Miss Seymour permitted a twinkle of comprehension to appear in her gray eyes, to which Reddy responded with a bold defiance in his blue ones.

"I thought likely," said Miss Seymour demurely. "Well, Brown, Lindsay and Company have asked me to recommend a boy for driving one of their trucks and I have recommended you. He must be smart, honest, and sober. Those are their three requirements and I have guaranteed that you are all those—now."

Reddy's eyes danced. Truck-driving did n't seem to

him much like work. But a second thought sobered him.

"I ain't got no dacent clothes fur a shofur," he said, once more moodily.

"Never mind; you can go to the settlement supply store and fit yourself out, and you can give me a dollar a week until the account 's settled."

"Wat 's de dough?"

Miss Seymour did not exactly understand and Reddy repeated his question in a more intelligible form:

"How many bucks a week?"

"Oh, you are to have seven a week for the first month, and if you prove satisfactory you will have eight a week the next month and a raise each month until you are getting twelve per. How old are you, Reddy?"

"Goin' on twenty."

Miss Seymour explained that Brown, Lindsay and Company had asked for a young boy, as they did not want to pay big wages for a driver for this rather supernumerary truck, and "seven per" could hardly be considered more than a boy's pay. But it sounded like wealth to Reddy.

He was sent down to the supply store to be outfitted from the skin out, and then to the bath-house for a thorough tubbing before he should don a stitch of his new clothes. It was almost an hour later that Miss Seymour looked up from her work, with something very nearly like a frown, to greet a dapper young fellow whom she took to be one of the pestilent salesmen that were forever haunting Sunshine House with offers of perfectly useless wares.

"Good-morning," she said icily, and was struck dumb

by the familiar twinkle in the blue eyes looking saucily into hers.

"Why, Reddy!" she exclaimed, "I did n't know you! What a transformation! Who helped you select your clothes?"

"Nobuddy, Miss; I done it all meself," answered Reddy, proudly, and a beautiful color sprang into the clear white that lay between the thick patches of freckles, and that Miss Seymour had never before seen.

"You 've made a fine selection, Reddy," she said approvingly, noting the trimness of the figure in a quite natty second-hand suit of dark brown, with a cap of the same color held carelessly in one hand and a pair of half-worn driving-gloves dangling from beneath the cap. "I 'm sure Brown, Lindsay and Company will take you at sight. And remember, Reddy, I 'm your guarantor that you will be truthful, honest, and sober."

"Yes 'm, I 'll not fergit," said Reddy, solemnly.

"And, Reddy, do you think you could get the Gang together this evening and let us organize them into a sure-enough club? I 'm going to try to get a job for every one of them. You don't know what a chance you boys have. Why, you can be the leading citizens of the town in a few years! You can be mayor, you can be anything you want to be. It 's a shame to trifle away such chances. I wish I were a boy!"

Reddy listened with kindling eyes and glowing cheeks, but his ardor was dampened a little when Miss Seymour repeated her question: "Do you think you can get the Gang together this evening?"

In the old days he would have answered promptly

and cheerfully, "Sure, ma'am!" but now he thought ruefully of his ragged and dirty clothes, which had been consigned to the furnace. If he could have donned those old clothes and rubbed some grime into his pink-and-white cheeks, and tousled his red curls till they lost all their beautiful luster, he could have corralled the boys with ease, he knew; they had always yielded prompt obedience to his word of command. But he doubted whether they would render obedience to such a "dude" as he knew himself to be at this moment. Therefore he answered Miss Seymour modestly and half mournfully:

"I 'll do me best, ma'am."

A moment later Miss Brown, another of the settlement residents, entered the office.

"Who 's your friend?" she inquired flippantly, in the vernacular of the district. She had passed Reddy on the steps, going out as she came in, and had been saluted gallantly but rather familiarly, she thought, for a stranger, by a wide flourish of the natty little cap; and she had responded to the salute with what she regarded as proper reserve.

"Reddy," said Miss Seymour.

"What! *Reddy Paschal! No!*"

It was impossible that this elegant but impertinent young man could be the dear, delightful, ragged and dirty Reddy of the streets, a prime favorite with every resident in the settlement.

"Yes, Reddy," reiterated Miss Seymour; "and he is on his way to Brown, Lindsay's to get a job driving one of their trucks. Do you think he 'll get it?"

"Oh, he 'll get it all right!—unless they should think

him too much of a fine gentleman. Why, he 's positively handsome, Helen."

"I think so. And he has promised to get the Gang together to-night at seven in the Boys' Club-room Number Two. We 're going to try to organize them out of a gang and into a club."

"I doubt his success in getting the boys together, if he goes after them in those clothes," said Miss Brown astutely.

"Yes," assented Helen, "I 'm a little dubious myself; and I think Reddy was, too. Ordinarily he would have said, 'All right, ma'am, they 'll be there,' but what he said this time was, 'All right, ma'am, I 'll do me best.' "

Miss Brown gathered up her gloves and fur that she had dropped on Helen's desk.

"Take my word for it," she called back over her shoulder, as she started to leave the office, "there won't be a single member of the Gang on hand but Reddy himself."

CHAPTER II

SERGEANT CASEY EATS HIS HAT

BUT Miss Brown was mistaken. Promptly at seven o'clock Helen mounted the stairs leading to the club-rooms and was greeted by a bedlam of sounds coming from No. 2: jeers, cat-calls, shrill whistles mingled with hoarse voices shouting derisive epithets. "Aw, watcher givin' us, Reddy?" "Shet yer gab and listen at him, I tells yeh." "Peel off de glad rags, Reddy, and we 'll listen at yeh." "Bah! we don' want no dude fur chief o' de Bolivar Street Gang," were a few of the shouts she distinguished from the confused jumble of sounds, and some of them were evidently uttered in Reddy's defense.

The noise grew more boisterous, the jeers more threatening, and one hoarse voice that she had noted as particularly truculent rose above the others: "Yer a damn fool, Reddy Paschal, to let that old cat make a baby out o' yer. I tells yer de Gang won't stand fur her nonsense, ner fur yourn nuther, damn yer!"

Helen thought it time for her to make her entrance, to save Reddy from actual violence. But with her hand on the knob she stopped abruptly. Reddy's clear, ringing voice rose above the tumult and quelled it into a semblance of silence.

"That 'll do, Fritz Swartz!" he said calmly, but with

such restrained anger that Helen glowed with pride in his self-control. "I 'm still de leader o' dis gang," Reddy went on, "and wen de matin's over I 'll peel off me glad rags an' mate anny wan o' ye dat's spilin' fur a fight on Flannigan's lot. But, *till* it 's over, wat I says goes. An' I says dat anny wan wat spakes o' Miss Seymour like ye did jes' now goes out o' dis room a kitin'. An'," he spoke a little louder—some one was evidently trying to interrupt; Helen thought it was Fritz again—"der ain't goin' ter be no gang anny more, der's goin' to be a club instid. Miss Seymour 's comin' up to start it. An' de fust ting ivery mimber o' de gang —de club, I mane—does, is ter git a job. Miss Seymour says so, an' wat Miss Seymour says *goes*. Git me, fellers?"

There were excited responses, but the two that Helen distinguished most easily were a hoarse growl, "No jobs in mine!" and an eager, "Wat 's de dough?" Reddy answered the last. "I 'm gittin' seven bucks per, but I 'll git a raise ivery month, ef I makes good. An' Miss Seymour says we 've ivery wan uv us got a chanst ter be mayor, or President, mebbe, ef we don't trow our chanstes away. An' I 'm goin' after mine, I tells yer dat now, fellers."

It was not Reddy's words; it was something that only the born orator and leader possesses that rang in his voice and thrilled Helen, even outside the door. That it thrilled the boys inside was evident from the changed nature of the eager shouts that deafened her ears, though the truculent growl of the dissenter was still audible.

She quietly opened the door and stepped in. An instant silence greeted her advent and she caught a glimpse

of a crouching figure slinking behind the other boys and making a hasty exit through the rear door. She did not doubt it was Fritz Swartz, as Reddy had called him, and she was rather glad that she was not to have this specially turbulent customer to deal with.

The task of organization was an arduous one, but her own winning personality, backed by Reddy's loyal support, won out. No boy, be he of the East End or the West End, could look into Helen's black-lashed gray eyes, with the twinkle in them that boys love, without being more than half won at the first glance. And when he had fully inventoried the burnished waves of red-gold hair, with darling little wispy ringlets escaping at temples and nape of neck, and the scarlet and smiling lips curved like—well, the boys did n't know anything about Cupid's bows, but curved like no lips they had ever taken note of before, and giving glimpses of such teeth! They were like rows of grains on a ripening ear of corn, and made your mouth water to look at them. And her voice! If the twinkling eyes and smiling lips had not subdued them, they were like wax to her will at the first sound of those warm, mellow, generous, jolly, heart-compelling tones.

Nevertheless it was an arduous task and it was a quarter to ten by the time the organization was complete and the boys had made their awkward "manners" to Helen and were clattering down the stairs eagerly discussing, and not always without the "argufying" boys love, the events of the evening. Reddy had been elected president, that had gone without a dissenting voice, but there had been fierce fights over the other offices. Every boy wanted to be an officer, of course, and as that was im-

possible they split up into factions and got into wrangles and tangles from which it took all Reddy's traditional authority and Helen's tact to rescue them. But every boy had sworn fealty to the constitution which, short and simple, had been drawn up, apparently by the boys themselves, but really by Helen's guiding hand. They had adopted the slogan, "For Truth and Honor," and had incorporated in the by-laws, "Every member of this club shall leave no stone unturned to secure a job."

Helen went to her room—her cell, she called it, for it was like nothing so much as the white and peaceful bedrooms in the convent hotel at Amalfi—thoroughly tired out with the day's work. It had begun at seven in the morning when the working mothers brought their babies to the day nursery; and through the fifteen long hours until ten o'clock there had been no moment she could call her own. She was tired, but she was elated, with the glow of satisfaction that comes with work accomplished. She had made a fine entrance for that wedge that was going to split the DeBolivar Street Gang organization. And if, mingled with a nobler feeling, there was a little pride that she was about to accomplish what every legal and social-service organization in the city had for years been trying in vain to accomplish, the pride was natural and wholly justifiable.

Yet she knew well the work was but just begun and there were more chances for failure than for success in the long run; and suddenly her elation left her. She was tired, miserably tired. Was it all worth while? At this moment, when she was dragging herself wearily to bed, her friends in the western part of the city were all gathered at a débutante dinner-dance at the St. Francis

Club. Very likely they were just getting up from the tables and beginning to dance. Helen was young, Helen was pretty, and a favorite in that gay young set that she still claimed as friends. She had been urged to attend this dance—"just this once," her friends had begged—but she had declared to herself that she had renounced society for this work that was so much more worth while, and she would not break over. She was adamant to her friends; yet at noon to-day, when Ted Jarvis called her up on the telephone and begged her, for old times' sake, to let him come for her and take her to the dance, she weakened. Perhaps, if she had not had this engagement with Reddy's "Gang," she might have yielded.

There was something in the sound of Ted's voice—she had not heard it in weeks—that always left her weak as water, though Ted would have said she was more like a stone wall in her resistance to every advance he attempted. She often said to herself that she thoroughly disapproved of Ted, and it filled her with a kind of dumb rage at herself that the mere sound of those pleasant, friendly tones should have such power to thrill her and weaken her, though never to the extent of undermining her stern purpose to keep him at a distance.

They had been friends from childhood, but Ted had all the handicaps of a rich man's son—no business, no profession, unlimited command of money. There was something of her Puritan ancestors, or, perhaps, her stern Scottish Covenanter forebears in Helen's make-up, and she said to herself that she had no use for a young man who spent his winter days in idling at a club window, ogling the girls that passed on the avenue, and his sum-

mer ones in polo and golf, with a liberal admixture of auction and poker both winter and summer. Such a life naturally results in too many cocktails or too strong high-balls at times; and when Helen heard the voice, she could not deny was dear to her, uncertain in its accents, its clear vibrant tones lost, she hardened her heart and said she would marry a working man or none at all.

There were those of her friends who claimed it was Ted Jarvis who had driven her into settlement work; but this Helen herself would have indignantly denied. When her sister married, leaving her absolutely free, with an income quite sufficient for her needs, she determined on a career for herself, and settlement work made the strongest appeal to her. Her sister was very unwilling that Helen should not share her new home with her as they had shared the old homestead for years, but though Helen loved her sister dearly and thought her brother-in-law the best fellow in the world, she was not going to inflict herself upon them, and made the unanswerable plea that she wanted her own independence. So the old home was shut up, with only a caretaker to look after it and keep it from falling into decay, and Cornelia Seymour went with her husband to her pretty little apartment in the Rexford and Helen went down to the settlement.

She had answered Ted laughingly at the telephone: "Couldn't possibly, Ted; I have n't had a ball gown in a year."

"Where 's the old blue one I always liked so much?" Ted suggested.

"Packed away in camphor balls; it would have to air for a week," Helen laughed.

"Oh, come now!" Ted urged with growing impatience, "you know you have plenty of gowns; you 're just making excuses."

Helen hesitated a moment. She really wanted to do as Ted urged her to. It had been long since she had done anything to please him, she would like to do this one thing; and she would love to have just one more dance with him. Then she remembered her boys.

"Oh, I forgot entirely, Ted! I am to organize a new club this evening out of the worst boys in the city. You 've heard of them—the DeBallivière Street Gang."

"That gang! Helen, I wish I were your guardian! I would never let you come within a mile of one of those fellows! Why, they 're a parcel of criminals and degenerates, I 've always heard."

"Not at all! They 've been much maligned, and I 'm going to give them a chance to come back. You 'd like them, Ted, if you knew them. As soon as my club is going well I 'll ask you down to talk to them and you 'll see what fine fellows they are, especially Reddy."

"Who 's Reddy?"

"The leader of the Gang and my special pet. You 'll like him, I know."

"Not if he 's your 'special pet,' " said Ted grimly. "But never mind the Gang now. I 'll call for you when your meeting 's over; it won't last later than ten, I suppose."

"I can't go, Ted," said Helen, really regretful now. "You know I should n't be dressed and I 've no clothes here. I should have to go to the house and hunt them up; it would be morning before I could be ready."

Ted was full of suggestions as to ways and means.

She could telephone to Cornelia to get her things ready and he would bring them down to her. Or, he would be at the settlement when the meeting was over and take her right up to the house and wait for her to dress. It did n't matter how late they got there if he could only have one more dance with her.

But Helen knew it could n't be done and Ted had grown more and more irritated at her persistent refusals until, at her final, "I *wish* I could Ted, but I *can't,*" he hung up the receiver in a pet, and Helen had visions of him going off to seek consolation in those high-balls she so hated for him.

Now, as she dragged herself wearily to bed, everything began to take on distorted proportions. Her work here was futile—it would never amount to anything more than a frivolous playing at social service. Who was she, to set herself up as better than those friends of hers at this moment dancing—and flirting, no doubt—at the St. Francis Club? She did n't believe Ted would ever call her up again and ask her to a dance and she would like one more dance with him—oh, how much she would like it! Of course she could have managed it perfectly if she had been a girl of any spirit or energy, or the good sport the boys of Reddy's gang believed her to be. And she *ought* to have gone with him. If she had any influence over Ted that might be used in helping to make a man of him, was n't that far better work than any she could ever hope to do down in the settlement?

She would have cried herself to sleep if she had been a girl given to crying, but at the very moment when she was feeling most dissatisfied with herself and her work, she was still able to say to herself: "This is a case of

nerves. I 'm tired. I 'll go to sleep and everything will be all right in the morning.''

The getting to sleep was difficult, but she accomplished it at last, and it was as she knew it would be: everything was all right in the morning.

Reddy dropped in on his way to work—he was not due at Brown, Lindsay's until half-past seven and settlement activities began at seven—just to show her how nice he looked, Helen laughingly accused him; and he blushed and looked sheepish, but did not deny the charge. Then the other boys of the Young Citizens' Club —the name the boys had given it—began to drop in and her whole morning was taken up in telephoning business houses that were always ready to help her in finding places for her boys, and in seeing that they were properly outfitted at the supply store.

It took several days of hard work to find places for them all, and then some of them did not keep their places and the work had to be done all over. There were many discouragements, but there were more encouragements, and Reddy was her daily joy. He had taken up night-school and had persuaded several of the boys to go with him; and there was never an evening, whether it was club night or not, that he did not stop in to talk over his plans, his hopes and ambitions with Miss Seymour. He was making good at Brown, Lindsay's and he did not need to tell Helen that he had ''cut out the booze for good.'' The fact was evident in his carriage, his clear, sparkling eyes, in the very tones of his voice. She no longer questioned whether it paid: Reddy alone had more than repaid her.

And the other boys were, most of them, if not making

quite so spectacular a reform as Reddy, being on the whole quite satisfactory. Long before the six weeks were over the DeBolivar Street Gang was thoroughly broken up. Fritz Swartz had never appeared at the club and for aught Helen knew he might still be pursuing his devious ways; but Fritz could not make a gang all by himself.

It was five weeks, not six, from the day of Sergeant Casey's visit, and Helen was in the office with Reddy by her side. It was club evening, and he had come a little early for a chat with Helen, as had grown to be his custom. Quite suddenly, as on that other day five weeks before, there was the sound of a heavy footstep on the pavement below, accompanied by a puffing and blowing that were unmistakable.

"It 's de Cop!" exclaimed Reddy. "Me fur de cellar!"

"Reddy, what did I tell you about 'de'!" said Helen, with the reproachful glance Reddy feared and loved. Helen was trying gradually to improve his English and Reddy was doing his best to follow instructions; but his excitement had betrayed him. Now he straightened up and, though the quick color flamed in his cheeks, his eyes twinkled saucily.

"It is the policeman, Miss Seymour," he said slowly and precisely. "I think I will retire for a few minutes." And throwing Helen an adoring glance over his shoulder —a glance that asked pardon for his impertinence and demanded recognition of his English in one—he vanished into the same invisible corner that had sheltered him on the sergeant's other visit.

And not a moment too soon, if he wished to avoid

the sergeant, who, puffing and blowing like a tug with a heavy tow, warped himself up alongside Helen's desk and dropped anchor beside it.

"Evenin , Miss," he said, removing his cap deferentially and plunging at once *in medias res.* " 'T-int six weeks yit, but you done the trick, an' I 'm come to eat me hat."

Helen laughed.

"Is it really broken up, do you think, Sergeant?" she asked.

"Absolute, Miss. Mebbe it won't stick, but there ain't no DeBolivar Street Gang anny more. An' wat the force wants to know is, how yeh done it!"

"By treating them like 'white folks,' I suppose," said Helen, her smile taking off the edge of the reproof and setting the sergeant to beaming fatuously in response. "This is club night. Come up and see the boys. You 'll hardly recognize them."

"I 'd like to, Miss, but I expect they would n't like anny cops round. It might fuss 'em."

"I don't believe it. Come and see."

"Wat do they do at their club loike?" the sergeant asked curiously and half inclined to accept the invitation.

"Oh, lots of things! Just now they 're practising for a minstrel show, and what do you think they are going to do with the money they make?"

"I dunno, Miss. It 's not goin' fur booze, I s'pose."

"Of course not! They are going to raise the money to buy a wheel chair for little Mikey O'Leary, who was run over a few weeks ago."

"Holy Moses!" Sergeant Casey was quite overcome or he would never have forgotten his manners before Miss

Seymour. "I don't think it 's the DeBolivar Gang yo mane at all, at all, Miss! It must be a lot o' swate little cherubs ye 've got up there."

"Come and see," Helen urged again, but the sergeant shook his head, mournfully.

"No 'm," he said with a huge sigh, "thank ye kindly, but I 'll be afther goin' home an' atin' me hat."

CHAPTER III

THE DEAN OF THE YARD

HELEN, in talking to Reddy about the management of his money affairs, had suggested to him: "You can give me a dollar a week until your clothes are paid for; a dollar a week I would deposit in the Settlement Savings Bank; keep out a dollar for your own necessities, and give the rest to your mother: she will be very glad and proud of your help with honestly earned money." Reddy's reply had shocked her and given her some unhappy moments.

"It 'll all go fur de booze," he said sullenly.

Helen knew that most of the fathers and some of the mothers of that neighborhood were much the worse for liquor, but it had not occurred to her that Reddy's mother could be anything but a hard-working, sober woman, possibly abused by a drunken husband, such as she knew many of the mothers to be. It gave her food for thought and she began to wonder whether there was anything she could do to help Reddy's home life.

She had been further surprised, and almost startled, by Reddy's selection of a course of study at the night-school. The boys she knew at the night-school all chose arithmetic first and writing or spelling next. Reddy chose English, which included composition and practical exercises in speaking correctly, and *literature!* Helen was much interested and asked him how he came to make such a selection.

"It 's me dad," he replied. "He told me I 'd nuff 'rithmetic to last, an' me han'-writin' 's all roight, but I niver could make a man o' mesilf onless I larnt to speak roight, an' all about wat people wrote. Dad says 'rithmetic ain't eddication, but literatoor is, an' talkin' roight."

Helen was filled with wonder at such wisdom from the kind of man she had supposed Reddy's father to be. All that she said to Reddy, however, was: "Your father is exactly right, Reddy; and, if you like, I 'll help you about the talking. Would you like to have me put you right when you are not speaking correctly?"

"Ef yeh plaze, ma'am, I 'd loike it foine!" said Reddy, beaming with such delight that Helen had n't the heart to begin on her criticisms this time.

But Reddy had started some speculations. She knew that Paschal was a fine old French name in the city and she had a vague remembrance of hearing tales of some member of the family who had gone wrong. Could Reddy's father possibly be the black sheep of the Paschals of Le Clair Place?

She was not inclined to pry into family secrets, but the more she thought of the remarkable advice Reddy's father had given him and the sad disclosure that his mother was a drunkard, the more convinced she felt that here might be a chance to help straighten out a tangle in two disordered lives.

She had lately learned that Reddy had a little sister of whom he was inordinately proud. "She 's de queen all roight, Miss Seymour," he had said in telling Helen about her. "She ain't none o' yer onery folks."

Helen had never seen her, but the little sister might

furnish the excuse for the visit she greatly desired to make. It was quite in the line of settlement work to visit the neighbors and invite the children to clubs and classes and Sunday-school, so that a visit to Reddy's home need excite no comment. Since Reddy was a member of one of the clubs, it was necessary only to consult the card index for his address; she need say nothing to him about her proposed visit.

She had a feeling that she was not being quite fair to Reddy in making this visit surreptitiously. She was afraid he might think she was trying to spy out the land; and she was afraid, also, that he might be sensitively ashamed to have her know the conditions of his home life. She argued the question with herself for days before she came to a definite conclusion; turning a strong search-light upon her motives for fear that they might be mingled with an idle and reprehensible curiosity. But by no amount of searching could she discover in herself anything but a conviction, daily growing stronger, that here was a stern and forbidding duty not to be shirked.

Her hesitations were focused into decision one evening when Reddy dropped in for a few minutes on his way to night-school. There was a moodiness, almost a sullenness, in his air that Helen had not seen in him for weeks. Nothing that she could say or do brought the ready twinkle to his eye or the half-pert rejoinder to his lips.

"I 've half a moind—*mind,*" said Reddy, correcting himself carefully, "not to go to me lessons this evenin'."

Helen never corrected his "me"; it was one of his Celticisms she loved. She did not ask him why he did

not wish to go. She was quite sure the fact was connected with something at home. She only said gently:

"I think I would, Reddy. You 'll feel all the better for a little hard study if anything is troubling you."

Reddy glanced up at her quickly and suspiciously; he had said nothing about any trouble. He turned away as quickly, to hide a kind of shamed confession in his eyes.

"Der ain't nutt'n troublin' me," he said sullenly, lapsing at once into his worst English. "I only tinks it 's no use. I 'll niver make no man o' mesilf."

Helen's heart ached for him. This was the first time she had seen Reddy discouraged since he started out to make a man of himself, as he expressed it. There must have been some trouble at home a little worse than usual to cast him down so utterly. There was nothing to do but set to work to re-inspire him, if possible, and she succeeded half-way. He went off squaring his shoulders and with dogged lines about his mouth that said as plainly as the words he uttered in farewell, "I 'll do me best, annyhow."

He was no sooner well out of sight than Helen rose, also with lines of determination about the mouth, and turning over her duties of the evening to one of the other residents, she set out for Reddy's home.

It was a warm evening in January, so warm that she carried her wrap over her arm. The furnace fires at the settlement had been allowed to die down and all the windows were open for air. It had been a severe winter, starting in early, and this was almost the first mild spell. Children and older people were taking advantage of it and thronging the streets, hatless and coatless.

She had many beaming salutations, as she threaded her way among the crowds or stopped to talk to some of the children, or to mothers wheeling babies in shaky second-hand go-carts and gossiping with other mothers as they went—babies of an age that would have been put to bed hours before if they had lived in the western part of the city.

This teeming life, apparently gay and happy, and the friendly greetings from all sides warmed Helen's heart and gave her courage for this visit she dreaded. Reddy's street was only a few blocks from the settlement and she found it comparatively deserted as she turned into it from the thronged street lined with little shops, poor enough but so brightly lighted as to give a delusive air of gaiety and cheer. Reddy's street was lined on both sides by unbroken rows of comfortable-looking, three-storied, red-brick houses with white doors and window-facings. It had an air of solid respectability, a relic of better days, when it had been a street of homes for well-to-do people. Had not Helen been familiar with the city's slovenly custom of turning its comfortable old dwelling-houses into the very poorest and most disreputable kind of tenements, she might have jumped to the conclusion that Reddy's home conditions were not so forlorn as she had fancied them to be.

But she knew better. She might have rung indefinitely at any one of those respectable-looking white doors surmounting the comfortable white stoops, and she would have met with no response. But between each pair of stoops there was an arch giving entrance to a paved alleyway, and passing under the arch and through the alleyway Helen found herself at once in the center

of teeming life. A brick-paved yard was surrounded on four sides by wooden galleries with rickety flights of stairs leading up to them, and rows of doors opening on them. Since it was a warm evening the life from the tenements had swarmed into the yard. One could not have believed that the encircling walls could give protection to so many human beings; and yet no doubt a large proportion of the dwellers in the enclosed tenements had found its escape into the gay throngs of the neighboring street.

Young children were playing noisy games, shrieking with delight or anger as the case might be; older girls were playing hop-scotch and older boys were yelling excitedly over marbles, with an occasional fisticuff going on in a retired corner. Untidy men in shirt-sleeves, corn-cob pipes in their mouths, were lounging against any convenient wall or post, idly watching the youngsters or engaged in heated discussions larded with angry oaths; while frowsy women thronged rickety staircases, indulging in shrill-voiced gossip interrupted by frequent scoldings yelled at the unruly children below them.

Helen hesitated a moment at the arched mouth of the alleyway, undecided whether or not to venture on threading her way through that throng. She had never happened before to visit one of "the Yards" at this hour of the evening, when, if the weather was mild, it was sure to be crowded and the tenements empty. But one of the older girls, catching sight of her as she lingered and hesitated; shrieked, "Here 's Miss Seymour!" and running up with one of her friends each girl snatched a hand and dragged Helen in triumph to be presented to their mothers on the staircase.

A momentary hush fell upon the noisy yard, as all eyes turned to witness the presentation. Helen, not liking to feel herself a damper on the evening's sociability, quickly made her inquiries for the Paschal residence and, refusing all offers of escort from a half-dozen girls and boys clamoring for the honor, climbed the rickety stairs, the women rising from them in haste to make way for her and reminding her of nothing so much as of a flock of hens disturbed on the roost.

She had rather expected, when she saw the crowd in the yard, to find Reddy's father and mother among them, and it was an agreeable relief to discover that they were not there. She could hardly have accomplished the purpose of her visit in such a throng. She wondered if, perhaps, they did not hold themselves above such familiar gatherings; but any illusions she might have entertained as to their being on any such superior social plane were quickly dispelled when she finally gained admittance to their rooms on the top floor.

She had stood there for some moments knocking and trembling as she listened to sounds from within that were unmistakable. When at last, in response to a louder knock, she heard an uncertain, "Come in," and opened the door, she was quite prepared for the spectacle revealed—an untidy room; a supper table covered with remnants of food, unwashed dishes, and the reeking remains of a bucket of beer; a disheveled woman lying half-across the table, helpless to rise even at the advent of a visitor, and a man wild-eyed, getting with difficulty upon his unsteady feet.

The man gazed at Helen a moment in wide-eyed and wide-mouthed astonishment; then, gathering himself to-

gether with a tremendous effort, he half reeled, half slid toward her, pushing a broken chair before him.

"Have-a-zheet, ma'am, s' down," he urged with drunken politeness.

Helen was afraid to sit down on the chair, it did not look safe, but she did not dare decline and she sat gingerly on the edge, supporting herself with her feet. She felt she must make a plunge at once to apologize for her presence, but the woman sprawled across the table depressed her horribly; she did not know how to begin. She had heard angry altercations while waiting at the door; was it possible the woman was hurt?

"I came to see Mrs. Paschal," she said at last, "about her little girl, Julie. I thought she might like to have the child come to Sunshine House to some of our clubs or classes. I 'm a friend of Reddy's," she was hurrying on, but at that Mr. Paschal interrupted her grandiloquently:

"B' pardon, ma'am. Have the honor? Miz Zheemore? Zhunzhine House?"

He attempted a sort of military salute and, not succeeding to his satisfaction, turned to his wife and shook her roughly by the shoulder.

"Eileen! Eileen!" he called. "Wa-gup. Vizhitur-to-zhee-you; Miz Zheemour."

The woman started, half opened her bleary eyes, closed them again, and was once more dropping off to sleep when her husband roused her more energetically. Once roused, she seemed fully awake to the shame of her condition, and with a muttered excuse slipped into a dark closet opening from the untidy room, whence issued sounds of splashing water, and whence, in a few minutes,

she emerged surprisingly rehabilitated. Her face was clean and shining, with cheeks as pink as Reddy's and not so freckled; her hair had been slicked hastily with a wet brush, and being curly it stood that treatment better than straighter locks could; and the bleary eyes had regained a little of their luster and intelligence and suggested a faint reminiscence of Reddy in their blue depths, that ought to have been sparkling but were heavy and bloodshot. Reddy had evidently inherited his beauty, and his brogue also, from his mother, as Helen discovered the moment Mrs. Paschal began to speak; but his courtly manners were his father's.

The orgy of beer that the two had been indulging in had left the woman in better control of her tongue than it had the man. Perhaps her share had not been so large as his, or perhaps her nap on the table and the application of cold water since had partially restored her. Her husband looked at her with astonishment as she came forward briskly and apparently quite in command of herself. A vague suggestion seemed to penetrate his cloudy brain that perhaps he, too, would be the better for a douse of cold water and, mumbling an unintelligible excuse, he withdrew into the dark closet, whence issued once more the sound of splashing water.

All this time that Helen had been engrossed with the intoxicated parents, not daring to take her eyes from them lest something terrible might happen, she had been vaguely conscious of a third presence in the room. Now her eyes, following Mr. Paschal's retreating figure, rested upon a picture that attracted her powerfully. In a dim corner of the room a little girl of five, beautiful as a cherub, sat hugging in her arms a cheap but gaily-

dressed doll, unmistakably new. The child was crooning soft lullabies, and the ecstasy that shone in her eyes and illuminated her whole face, as she gazed in rapt adoration at her beloved dolly, gave her a beauty that was almost angelic. Evidently she had been entirely oblivious of the quarrel that had been going on between her parents—perhaps familiarity had hardened her to such scenes—and even the arrival of the visitor could win only an occasional glance from her. As Mrs. Paschal came forward to greet her visitor, with the air of brazening out the situation, Helen rose to her feet.

"Is this Julie, Mrs. Paschal?" she asked, going toward the child and impulsively extending both hands. Julie looked up wonderingly a moment; then rose gravely and, to Helen's astonishment, courtesied before putting out a bird-like hand in return.

"Why, who taught you to courtesy so prettily?" asked Helen, delightedly.

"It 's mesilf, ma'am, ez did it," said the child's mother, half proudly, half defiantly. "I know how quality children 's brought up an' me little gurrul's jest as good as thim."

"Indeed she is! She 's lovely!" said Helen, and thinking rapidly, as she spoke, that this love and admiration of her child might yet be made to prove the woman's salvation. "Where did you get such a pretty dolly, dear?" she asked, lifting child and dolly into her lap and choosing this time a more substantial chair than the one Mr. Paschal had offered her.

"Weddy gived it to me," said Julie, submitting gravely to the attentions of the "pretty lady," but hugging dolly the tighter, nevertheless.

"Reddy 's a good brother; is n't he?" said Helen, unable to resist giving the child a little squeeze, she was such a darling armful.

"Yeth 'm," lisped Julie, solemnly, but squirming uneasily lest dolly be hurt.

"Indade he is," said Reddy's mother proudly, "an' a good son, ef I do say so ez should n't." She wiped a maudlin tear with the back of her hand.

By this time Mr. Paschal had returned to the room, and on steadier legs than he had left it.

"Indeed, madam," he said with great stateliness, and a very visible effort at controlling his speech, "my Pierre is a son to be proud of since he has made such a wonderful reform—for which, madam, I understand we have you to be grateful to."

His *empressement* embarrassed Helen, and it left her wondering greatly at the contrast between father and mother. What also struck her as incongruous was that while the woman was slovenly in her dress and the man untidy to a degree, the child was almost exquisitely neat; face and hands and dress clean, and hair beautifully brushed and curled.

"Who made these pretty curls?" she asked the child, lifting one as she spoke, more as a refuge from embarrassment than for the sake of the caress she bestowed upon it.

"Weddy."

"Reddy!" Helen glanced up inquiringly at the mother, who to her surprise burst into tears. It was a real Irish lament, head buried in her apron and moaning aloud, "Ah me! ah me!"

Helen did not comprehend, but she did not have to

wait long for an explanation. Mr. Paschal spoke for his wife.

"You may have observed, madam," he said with grotesque dignity, "that Mrs. Paschal and I have been engaged in a manner wholly unbefitting ladies and gentlemen. My son, who for some time past has exerted a restraining influence on both his mother and myself, resented our little lapse this evening, and left us in anger. Not, however, until he had washed and dressed his sister, whom her mother does not often neglect, to the best of his ability, and had gone out and bought her the doll she is now cherishing. I am constrained to say that his anger was not unjustifiable, and Mrs. Paschal's emotion is due to her remorse that she should have distressed so good a son."

At this Mrs. Paschal redoubled her sobs and moans and Helen hardly knew whether to smile at the father's grandiloquence, or sympathize with the mother's remorse, or be angry at both of them for the disgrace they had brought upon themselves and their children. For it was very clear to Helen that the pretentious manner of Mr. Paschal was the false veneer assumed by a man who has once known better things and is bitterly ashamed to have his degradation unveiled. But as she remembered the distress and discouragement of Reddy her anger waxed hot and she spoke with quick indignation:

"I am not surprised, Mr. Paschal, at your wife's remorse! The parents of such a son as Reddy should rather plunge a hand into the fire and burn it to the bone than be willing to try to drag their son back into the filth and mire from which he is struggling so hard to extricate himself. No wonder he was utterly discouraged this

evening and ready to give up the fight, when he had left such a home as this behind him, and could see no future for himself or for the little sister he idolizes but a life of degradation and probable sin and misery."

As she spoke it flashed through her mind that such temerity of speech might easily result in bodily violence to herself from two people morbidly sensitive, no doubt, and whose temper might be inflamed by drink. But she need not have feared. At her last words Mrs. Paschal set up a veritable howl; but they seemed to have pierced Mr. Paschal's veneer of magniloquence and it dropped from him, leaving him, in manner at least, the simple, straightforward gentleman he evidently had once been.

"Eileen," he said with some sternness, "be quiet! Miss Seymour, you cannot be too harsh in your judgments of us. Reddy is a son to be proud of and I should like to give you my word of honor that he shall never again be distressed and disgusted as he has been tonight, but that I know I can no longer rely upon my own word. I am a man utterly and irretrievably degraded, without the strength to do right, even should I have the desire."

"An' it 's me ez has dragged him down!" wailed his wife. "Woe 's me! Ef ye 'd niver seen me, Jules Paschal, the betther it ud been fur ye."

"Eileen, be still!" he commanded again, and turned once more to Helen: "No woman, madam, can drag a *strong* man down from the level where he belongs. Eileen was a good girl when I married her; it is I who have injured her and debased her. She has given me two beautiful children and for that alone I should give her a place of honor among her kind and a home of

respectability. Instead, we live like swine, in two filthy rooms, surrounded by such neighbors that my wife does not dare let her angel child out of her sight; and the child has no playmates and no chance for fresh air or companionship."

It gave Helen an opening and she proposed that the little Juliette—"named for her father," interpolated the mother—should attend the Sunshine House kindergarten every morning. The children in the under-age kindergarten were very sweet and no harm could come to Julie from companionship with them under the guardianship of the kindergarten teachers, who were the loveliest young women in the city. It would be good for Julie to have child companionship and learn to play children's games—good for her health and good for her mind.

The mother might have refused, so afraid was she of the contaminating influence of the children of the neighborhood for her darling child, but the better judgment of the father came to the rescue.

"It will be good for Julie, as Miss Seymour says, Eileen," he pronounced gravely. "We cannot deny our child the few advantages open to her."

One other matter Helen dared broach after Julie's kindergarten was settled. She broached it with fear and trembling, but for Reddy's sake she took her courage in her hands.

"Mrs. Paschal," she said in her most winning tones, "I wish you would let me help you tidy up your rooms. It would be lovely to have Reddy come back to a real home this evening. Let me help you wash the dishes and brush up the floor, to begin with."

"Indade, an' I 'll not be afther lettin' ye sile yer purty han's wid me dirty things!" Reddy's mother was horrified at the thought. "But Jules an' me 'll tidy up. We 'll scrub the floor an' hev iverythin' shinin' by the toime Reddy 's home, I 'll promise ye."

"Yes, madam, no one knows better than my wife how to make things clean and shining," said Mr. Paschal, with a return to his old magniloquence. "And she shall have the benefit of any poor assistance that I can render her."

And to assure Helen that she could trust them to have everything in readiness for Reddy's return, Mrs. Paschal gathered up the dishes and hustled them into the dark room at the rear before the visitor had finished making her adieus. Mr. Paschal courteously insisted on accompanying her down the rickety stairs and through the crowded yard, with something of the air Sir Walter Raleigh might have had in escorting Queen Elizabeth through the slums of London. It was a little trying to Helen, but she made the best of it and was interested to see that while the yard greeted her passage with many tokens of respect, there were not wanting some of the same tokens bestowed upon her escort—a tribute, no doubt, to fallen greatness.

And it amused her greatly to observe the condescending kindness with which Reddy's father received these tokens. A lordly wave of the hand to one; an affable "How are you this evening, Jamie?" to another; and "A fine evening, Mrs. O'Rafferty, for the little ones," to the perspiring mother of two wrangling children, left each recipient of his attentions in a state of beaming gratification at his noble condescension, and supreme exaltation over their less fortunate neighbors.

CHAPTER IV

OLD-TIME TIMES

ON the twenty-third of January there was a débutante ball at the St. Francis Club. This was not the one Ted had begged Helen to attend with him; there had probably been many débutante balls at the club since that evening, for the St. Francis was a popular place for giving them, but Ted had never again asked Helen to accompany him to one.

A full report of the President's speech before Congress on the twenty-second had appeared in the morning papers and Ted was discussing it with Horace Newlands in the lounge of the club while his friends were dining and dancing in the great dining-room and ball-room set aside for débutante balls and dinners.

Ted had not consoled himself for Helen's refusal with as many high-balls as she had feared he might, though no doubt he had fastened more firmly the habit of taking more than were good for him; indeed, one sat at his elbow this moment, with a siphon and the rest of the paraphernalia for replenishing it when needed.

Since the débutante's mother, Mrs. Anderson, was an old family friend, Ted had felt compelled to show himself at the dinner-dance, but since he was assigned to the hostess's table with several other "supernumeraries," he had excused himself early, promising to return when the dancing should be in full swing.

Horace Newlands, who was not invited to the dinner,

found him seated in a corner of the great bay-window, his back to the room, his face to the gaily lighted street, apparently buried in the deepest gloom. Horace, who was an older man with a very friendly feeling for Ted, thought he knew what was the matter with him and felt sorry for him, but for a while he did not quite dare break in upon his solitary mood. However, he ventured at last, when he was quite sure no good could come from the mixture of moods and high-balls Ted seemed to be indulging in.

"Ted," he called across to him, "what do you think of the President's speech?"

"It 's all right," answered Ted, but his tone did not encourage conversation. Nevertheless Horace persisted.

"Do you know, I don't very well see how we can keep out of the war after this," said Horace. "I 've an idea the President 's leading up to a break; what do you think?"

"I think it 's high time!" said Ted and, wheeling his chair around, he burst into an excited invective of what he called the President's dilatory tactics, and the "insults" we had been obliged to swallow.

Horace knew that the high-balls were partially responsible for the excitement, but he was glad to have Ted roused from his dark reveries and he led him on deeper into the discussion, switching from the President to Germany's nefarious policies, while Ted waxed hotter and hotter. Suddenly he sprang to his feet.

"I believe I 'll go over and see if I can't get into it somehow!" he exclaimed. "Lots of the fellows are fighting with the British; I don't see why they should n't take me. Anything would be better than this horribly

humdrum existence I 'm leading. I don't suppose I 'd help the cause much, but there 's got to be cannon fodder and I might as well take the place of a better man. I could do that all right, at least."

Horace laughed. There was neither patriotism nor pleasantry in Ted's way of putting it, and if possible he would get him off of his grim plane.

"Yes," he said, looking up at Ted's six feet of broad-shouldered muscle. "You 'd make a nice mouthful for one of the Krupp monsters, but I believe, if I were you, I 'd wait a bit. We 're bound to be in it before long and I suppose you 'd rather go as an American officer than as a British private; would n't you?"

"We 'll never be in it!" growled Ted. "We 'll be kept dangling, fed upon fine speeches until the war 's over!"

"Ted," said Horace, "what 's the matter with you? Why are n't you in yonder dancing with the girls, instead of growling at the President and drinking more high-balls than are good for you?"

"I don't care for débutantes," said Ted, loftily. "I find them insipid."

"Do you? Now, I think there 's nothing sweeter than a nice little bud; and you know it 's a real pleasure to assist in developing them by showing them what conversation really is. Train them out of their platitudes."

"Thank you!" with fine scorn. "I prefer them already trained. Give me a young woman who can talk sense and is n't so gone on herself that you have to dope her up with outrageous flattery every other minute."

"Like . . .?" queried Horace with lifted eyebrows.

"Oh, like half a dozen nice girls!" said Ted, flushing

a little: "Nellie Holmes, Mary Van Ostrand, Helen Seymour, Janie Barton." Ted hurried through his list, especially slurring over Helen's name, which he nevertheless dared not omit, knowing the omission would be too noticeable.

"That 's a fine list," agreed Horace, "and Helen Seymour's the cream of it. There 's a young woman any man would be lucky to win! I 'd go in for her myself if I thought there was any chance for me."

"Better try," sneered Ted. "'Faint heart,' you know." But in a moment he repented. He and Horace had been on thoroughly confidential terms ever since Horace got him out of a bad scrape—a scrap, rather—at the Country Club. But for Horace, Ted would have been expelled that time, for fighting was absolutely against the rules.

"See here, Horace," he said, "just keep your hands off in that direction, will you? I may never succeed in winning her myself, but—" and here Ted's voice actually trembled with the intensity of his feeling—"I would never stand for it to see any one else get in ahead of me."

"Then why don't you set about it in earnest, if that 's the way you feel?" demanded Horace, seriously.

"Earnest! There was never any one more in earnest than I 've been for years. But no matter what I try it 's always *impasse*. I might as well be up against a stone wall."

"Did you ever try going to work and leaving off about three-quarters of your high-balls?" asked Horace, with some fear but more determination to give Ted "a jolt," as he would have expressed it.

Ted flushed angrily, but before he could reply a message from Mrs. Anderson, begging his assistance with a wall-flower débutante, gave him a chance to retreat with dignity.

It was on the very next day that Ted received an invitation from Helen's sister Cornelia for Sunday evening tea. Ted knew, or thought he knew, that Helen always spent Sunday evening with her sister and for a moment he was half inclined to decline the invitation; he would not subject himself to the chance of further rebuffs from Helen. That is, he thought he was so inclined; in reality he could not possibly help jumping eagerly at the chance of spending an evening with her.

Helen never wore her uniform when she was visiting Cornelia, for Cornelia objected to it. Ted hated it. He had to admit it was becoming—her hair a little more golden, her face a little fairer, in the severe black and white—but it made him think of nuns and Sisters of Mercy, and seemed to set her apart from common mortals, surrounded by impregnable walls. Helen had not known that Ted was to be at Cornelia's, but nevertheless it was with Ted in her thoughts that she had worn a gown which had been one of his favorites—a soft heliotrope velvet and chiffon that deepened the gold of her hair and the rose of her cheek and, as Ted had often noted, turned her gray eyes to violet. It was not an evening dress, but it was cut low enough in the neck to admit of the wearing of an old-fashioned necklace of amethysts set in dull gold. Ted always regarded that necklace as the finishing touch, but it may not have been the necklace that gave such an effect of snowy whiteness to the uncovered throat and the slender pillar of the neck

that bore the golden head like a stately lily on its stem.

So Ted had thought many times; and he thought it again at the first glimpse he caught of her in her sister's pretty living-room of pale grays and soft greens, furnished to harmonize with any color its owner might choose to wear, and bringing out Helen's violets and heliotropes and golds in rich relief. It had been weeks since Ted had seen her last and she almost took his breath away with the vividness of her beauty now; he gave himself credit for acquitting himself with admirable sang-froid as he turned from his greetings to Cornelia and extended his hand.

"How do you do, Helen! This is an unexpected pleasure," he said with exactly the right degree of good comradeship, he felt.

Helen was not quite so conventional. She flushed with pleasure as she met him more than half-way with extended arm and hand.

"Why, Ted! I 'm so glad to see you!" she exclaimed delightedly. "Cornelia, why did n't you tell me Ted was to be here?"

"I wanted to give you a pleasant surprise," said Cornelia, beaming.

"Or perhaps she was afraid you would stay away, if you knew," said Ted in pretended jest, but with what he regarded as more than a grain of truth.

"That sounds more like it!" said Harry Saunders, jovially. Harry was Helen's brother-in-law, who regarded Helen as the loveliest creature on earth, next to Cornelia, and far too good for any such ne'er-do-weel as Ted Jarvis. He was not sure he approved of Cornelia inviting him to meet Helen. Every one knew Ted was

dead in love with her; and every one knew, or thought he knew, that she had gone into settlement work to avoid him. Harry resolved on the moment that he would engross Helen's attention through most of the evening and that Ted should not drive her home; that would give him too good a chance for a tête-à-tête. Taking Helen home was Harry's Sunday night job and he would not relinquish it to Ted.

It was a very pleasant Sunday evening that the four spent together, though at the start it had threatened to be anything else. They were almost too much like four good comrades to please Harry. Try as he might, he could not succeed in engrossing Helen as he had planned to do. It would never be an easy task in a party of four and Helen made it harder by always trying to include Ted—Harry gave Ted credit for never "butting in" himself. The fact was that Ted recognized Harry's attitude at once and resented it. He adopted as a retaliatory measure a cynical aloofness of tone extremely unpleasant to the two women and that was the occasion of Helen's efforts to draw him out of it and into more genial relations. She was very much vexed with Harry. She understood Ted's sensitiveness; he knew himself to be under a ban with most of the thoroughgoing young business men of the city, who prided themselves as much on their energy and commercial success as they did upon their higher moral qualities, and correspondingly disapproved of any shiftless young fellow who lived for polo, golf, and cards. Helen disapproved just as thoroughly, but now that her childhood's friend was in her own home, as she might regard her sister's house, she was not going to have him snubbed and made uncomfortable.

She found a chance to say as much to Harry in a low aside, in an interval when Cornelia, trying to atone for Harry's squelching with a lively recital of some débutante pranks at Mrs. Anderson's ball, absorbed Ted's real or apparent attention.

Ted lost Helen's words to Harry, but he could never be wholly oblivious to anything Helen was doing or saying, no matter what other demands might be made upon his attention, and he was conscious that there had been a confidential murmur of some kind between the two. He thought, also, that he understood its nature when Harry, at the first opening Cornelia gave him, claimed his help against Helen, who he declared was abusing him.

"You may not know it, Ted, but my sister-in-law is a termagant. I hereby warn all young men that she may look like an angel, but her looks—"

"Can't half do her justice," broke in Ted, mollified at once by Harry's nonsense and determined to meet him half-way.

After that the four had their pleasant evening, "like old-time times," Helen said, and met such a wistful look in Ted's eyes in response that she was sorry she had said it.

Cornelia was a delightful hostess and her Sunday evening teas were famous, with just the things men like most served in a fashion as informal as possible. They took their coffee together around the living-room fire, big logs in the wide fireplace blazing and crackling, the wind outside blowing great guns, and a little sleet driving against the windows—just enough to make them thoroughly appreciate the warm coziness inside.

The two men had appropriated *chaises longues* with their high-balls, which they had brought with them from the dining-room, and their ash-trays and match-boxes were on little stands at their elbows. Ted had managed to get his chair into a corner of the fireplace that threw him into half-shadow and from which vantage-ground he could, unobserved himself, let his glances rest at will on Helen in the full glow of the leaping flames.

At a gust a little fiercer than any that had preceded it, driving a strong dash of mingled rain and sleet against the panes, Cornelia shuddered.

"What an awful night!" she exclaimed. "Helen, you must not think of going home to-night: it will be a terrible drive all the way to Sunshine House over icy streets."

Ted caught a swift, and he believed an involuntary, glance in his direction. Could it be that Helen had been counting on the drive home with him which he had been looking forward to from the first glimpse he had caught of her in Cornelia's living-room? He gave her no chance to reply to Cornelia. With a quick beat of the heart he answered for her.

"Don't ruin a happy evening, Cornelia, by spoiling the climax!" he said jestingly. "I 've been looking forward all the evening to driving Helen home. I have on my chains and she 'll be absolutely protected from the weather."

"See here, Ted, that 's my job!" remonstrated Harry. "It won't be Sunday evening without that drive to Sunshine House; will it, Cornelia? I make love to Helen all the way down, and make it up with Cornelia all the way

back; and I 'll tell you right now, Ted, you 'll never know what bliss is until you 're married, have a tiff with your wife, and make it up!"

"Harry!" remonstrated Helen and Cornelia in concert, Helen presumably objecting to the idea of Harry making love to her, and Cornelia resenting the implication that she would care if he did.

"I 'm sorry," said Ted calmly. "I 'd like to take you both, if I had room for four. You could sit on the back seat with Helen going down and with Cornelia coming home; but, unfortunately, my roadster carries only two."

"Who said anything about your roadster? Helen, I demand that you inform this young man at once that I 'm your 'steady,' and that Sunday nights belong to me."

Helen, who to Ted's delight had flushed a little over this controversy, answered Harry, half laughing and half vexed at his foolish persiflage:

"I 'm sorry, Harry, but I don't believe Cornelia cares about going out on a night like this, and Ted has his car here and yours is in the garage. I don't believe yours has chains on, either; so if Ted is willing to take that long drive, I think it 's the sensible thing to let him."

"No," said Cornelia, "I don't want to go out in this sleet; I 'm horribly afraid of skidding. But I don't want you to go, either; can't you possibly stay, Helen? We 'll send you home the first thing in the morning."

"Not possibly. The Day-Nursery mothers come at seven, you know, and I must be there to receive them. Ted's car is all right; there 's no chance of skidding with chains on."

"Not a chance in the world," affirmed Ted hastily.

"Why can't some of the others receive the Day-Nursery mothers?" persisted Cornelia.

"Because they 're all busy with their own duties. Seven o'clock is almost the busiest hour of the day in a settlement—giving out milk for the babies, opening up the supply store to the women who must do their shopping before they go to work, a hundred and one things to be done all at the same moment. You would n't have me shirk; would you?"

"*I* would," growled Harry. "I 'd have you chuck the whole business, and come here and live like a decent sister-in-law."

"Oh, I s'pose not," wailed Cornelia, giving Helen no chance to reply to this, "but I 'm like Harry, I wish you were out of it all."

"Oh, no, you don't! I love it so!" glowed Helen. Whereupon Ted in his corner looked decidedly dejected, if any one could have seen how he looked, and Harry sighed prodigiously.

"Well, if you must you must, I suppose," Cornelia yielded. "Have you ever seen any one as hard-headed as Helen, Ted?"

"Never!" responded Ted promptly, with heart-felt conviction, and Cornelia laughed.

"She might as well go with Ted, since she will go and he has his car here," it was finally decided by Cornelia, and for the rest of the evening Ted was in exultant spirits. He found it hard to keep himself within bounds. He told stories in his best vein, he laughed hilariously at Harry's jokes—often very poor ones, but the poorer they were the harder he laughed—he paid pretty compliments to Cornelia and he looked at Helen every time she spoke,

and very often when she did n't, with his heart in his eyes.

Cornelia said at last:

"Why, Ted! You 're more like your old self than I 've seen you for ages! What 's happened?"

"Nothing," said Ted, with a mischievous twinkle at Harry, "but I feel exactly as if something nice were going to happen. Perhaps it 's my ride with Helen."

Helen was annoyed with herself that such arrant nonsense should have the power to set her pulses to quickening and, as she was quite sure, her face to flushing. She knew very well that Ted from his deep lair—he was lazily sunk in the depths of the *chaise longue* and head and shoulders were in shadow—she was quite sure that she could not change color without Ted's seeing it and very wrongly gathering encouragement from it. She decided to divert the talk.

"Ted," she inquired, but with too much nervous haste to give her question the nonchalance she intended, "is n't your friend Mr. Paschal's name Jules?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Whom is he named for? Do you know?"

"Yes, I do. It 's funny. Two days ago I could n't have answered your question, but since Friday night I can. Why do you ask it?"

"Because I want to know," said Helen, laconically.

"Pardon!" murmured Ted. "The best of reasons! Jules told me the other day that he was named for an uncle he had never seen, or did not remember. He said the family never mentioned him and he did n't know whether he was dead or alive. He did n't believe his father knew, either. There was some sort of scandal, he

believed—something about his running off with one of his mother's maids and marrying her, whereupon the family dropped him. Jules said he did n't think that was quite a square deal and some day he was going to set out on a hunt for him. He invited me to join the quest and I half promised I would. Jules has a premonition that his uncle is going to turn up some day, rolling in wealth, and bequeath him a fortune for the sake of his name. Have you any data that could aid us in our quest, Helen?''

''None at all,'' she answered, but Ted was not sure she was absolutely frank. There was a little flicker of her eyelashes, as she said it, that must mean something.

CHAPTER V

"GOOD-NIGHT, MISS SEYMOUR"

WITH Helen snugly ensconced beside him in his comfortable roadster, and well on the way eastward, Ted thought the joys of the evening would be only well begun. But to his urprise his elation had deserted him, and a very uncomfortable sense of constraint had taken its place.

Helen, too, was silent. Could it be that she, also, was embarrassed? Ted had formed a very definite idea, sitting back at ease in his *chaise longue* and watching Helen from his dark corner, as to what he was going to say to her on that ride, which he intended to make as slow and long drawn out as possible. But now, if his ideas had not deserted him his courage had. To relieve his own very real and Helen's fancied embarrassment he turned to her with a sharp question:

"Helen, were you telling me the truth when you said you had no data to give me of Jules Paschal's uncle?"

Helen hesitated a moment before she answered:

"I was telling the absolute truth when I said I had no data to *give* you, but—Ted, will you keep a secret for me?"

"Of course I will, if you ask me, but if it 's anything about Jules's uncle I hope you 'll give me permission to tell him. He 's really in earnest in wanting to locate him."

But Helen would not give the permission. It was not her secret, she declared, and she had no right even to tell Ted, only—only—

"Only you know how proud I should be to have you confide *anything* to me, and how inviolable I should regard your confidence," interrupted Ted quickly. "It would be a little like old times, when you and I were 'pals,' Helen."

"Perhaps some day we 'll be pals again, Ted."

"When?" demanded Ted quickly.

"When you 've found yourself; I 'm sure you will some day."

"How?" abrupt and stern.

"I don't know how exactly, Ted"—Helen was not to be intimidated—"but there are two ways I know would help: give up high-balls and go to work. I hated to see you bring your high-ball out into the living-room with you to-night, it looked as if you could n't do without it even for an hour or two."

Ted felt himself flush quickly and before he could control himself he retorted angrily:

"It 's a long time since you have condescended to show any such interest in me, Helen! Perhaps there would n't have been any necessity for so many high-balls if my old friend had n't turned me down so completely."

It was Helen's turn to feel a quick impulse of resentment at Ted's unmanly charge, "cowardly" she called it, but she was determined not to quarrel with him. She had been glad of the opportunity to drive home with him because she had wanted to say some things to him. It looked now as if she were not going to be able to adopt that tone of friendly mentor she had determined upon;

and perhaps, as Ted intimated, she had forfeited all right to the rôle. But Helen could always be relied upon to defend herself.

"You remember why; don't you, Ted?" she asked pointedly.

This time it was shame that dyed Ted's cheek a deeper red in the dark than his anger had done.

"Oh, Helen! forgive me!" he begged contritely. "I was a beast and it would have served me right if you had never spoken to me again. But—but—I thought you had forgiven me all that. I thought it was buried long ago."

"It was, Ted," said Helen with a quick revulsion to tenderness at the pain in Ted's tones. "I had no right to 'throw it up' to you again. I hate not being a good sport! Will you forgive me, Ted?"

"No," said Ted, rapturously, at Helen's quick retraction, all his soul in his "no," "I have nothing to forgive. If you 'threw it up' at me every day for a thousand years I could n't find fault with you; I 'd deserve it all."

And, perfect rapport being reëstablished, Ted returned to Helen's topic.

"I 'm not going to say anything about the high-balls, Helen; I 'm not good at making promises. But tell me how I could go to work. I have no business and no profession."

"Could n't you make a business?—with all your money?"

"That 's the trouble with a will like Dad's," said Ted, hotly. "I can't touch my capital until I 'm thirty and then only a part of it. I have had at least three chances to get in on these munition works since the war began,

but I had to put in some capital and I could n't touch mine. I know no better way to make an idler and a waster of a young fellow than to put him on a comfortable living income and not allow him to make any use of his money."

"Not allow him to make ducks and drakes of it, I suppose your father thought."

"Better make ducks and drakes of his money than of himself," said Ted, bitterly. "I shall know better than to treat a son that way if I ever have one. It takes away all power of initiative and all inspiration for work."

"Perhaps you are right, Ted," said Helen, a note of sympathy in her voice that went to his heart. "Perhaps you are more sinned against than sinning. I 'm not going to preach any more. Only—*try* to get some kind of work; won't you?"

"There is one kind of work I could get into," said Ted slowly, "and if you say so, I 'll do it."

"What is it?" asked Helen, more than half guessing what his answer would be.

"I can go to war."

Helen was silent so long that Ted asked finally:

"Well, what is it? Shall I go?"

"It is n't quite fair to make me decide such a question as that for you, Ted; do you think so?" asked Helen.

"I 'm ready to abide by your decision."

"I don't want to decide!" said Helen, almost petulantly. But in a moment her mood changed and there was a thrill of exaltation in her voice as she spoke that moved Ted strangely:

"But, oh, Ted, if you should go over to help fight the

battle of truth, and righteousness, and liberty, against wrong, and tyranny, and oppression, I should be so *proud* of you! I should feel almost as if I were helping to untangle this terrible snarl the world is in. It 's a wonderful thing to be a young man, Ted, in these days!''

It was Ted's turn to be silent and Helen began to think that she had said too much. He broke his silence, at last, and Helen never remembered to have heard Ted speak with such grave seriousness.

''I was not thinking of it as you were, Helen,'' he said slowly, ''I 'm afraid I have given but little thought to the wrongs of the world. My only idea in going over was to escape from deadly boredom, or get a little spice of adventure, or to please you. I 'm afraid it would n't please you very much to have me go in that spirit.''

''It would n't please me at all, Ted. Don't go if you can't go with a heart set on helping humanity.''

''I 'm afraid I 'm not the *preux chevalier* you would like me to be. In fact, I 've never bothered much about humanity,'' said Ted, ''though of course I am sorry for Belgium and the French.'' And he added dolefully, ''I see now you 'll drop me out of your good graces entirely.''

Helen laughed.

''Never mind about my 'good graces,' Ted! They don't count. But, do you know, here we are almost at Sunshine House and you have n't asked me about Jules's uncle.''

''I forgot him utterly,'' said Ted, vastly relieved at the change of subject. ''Tell me about him.''

Helen told him the full tale of her visit to Reddy's

home and she finished with, "I 'm quite sure he is Jules's lost uncle."

Ted had listened without an interruption and he answered Helen quietly, "I think he is." But abruptly he added, "Is that Reddy your 'special pet' you told me about?"

Helen laughed at the spice of venom in his voice.

"He is that!" she answered, involuntarily dropping into Reddy's mode of speech.

"Then I 'll tell you what I 'd do if I were you. I 'd get your Reddy boy to sound his father as to whether or not he cares to get back on terms with his family. In the meantime I 'll sound Jules as to whether or not the family would be willing to receive the prodigal. And if both sides prove amenable to reason, some decent way of living and a respectable job could be found for him. The Paschals certainly owe that much to one of their own blood and kin."

"You 're splendid, Ted!" Helen said with enthusiasm. "I knew if I told you you would find a way to help."

"Wait till we see how it pans out," said Ted, modestly. "In the meantime," loftily, "any other advice you would like? I 'm quite ready to offer my services as perpetual adviser and counselor."

At the door of Sunshine House, the light from the hall shining through the glass and throwing them both into high relief, Ted held Helen's hand a minute.

"Good-night, Helen," he said, hesitating a moment as if he would say more. Then he lifted her hand to his lips, dropped it quickly, ran down the steps, sprang into his car, whose engine he had left running, and was away

before Helen had time to realize what it was that had sent her blood tingling to her finger-tips.

As she stood there, looking after him, half dazed, a dark figure came slowly around the corner of the house and Helen recognized it.

"Why, Reddy!" she called, "what are you doing here at this time of night?" For Sunshine House closed its doors to visitors at ten o'clock, and it was long after ten now.

"I was waiting to see you," said Reddy, shamefacedly.

"Waiting out in the cold? Why, you must be frozen! Come in and get warm and tell me what 's the matter."

She had visions of trouble at home.

"No 'm, thank yeh. I ain't cold. I wuz jes' waitin' to say, 'Good-night.' "

It touched Helen to think of him waiting out in the sleet and cold for so small a pleasure, but before she had thought of the right thing to say Reddy asked abruptly:

"Who wuz that feller wat brought yeh home in his auto?"

Reddy had no right to ask such a question and Helen was on the verge of answering him icily, but she remembered he knew no better.

"Why do you ask, Reddy?" she asked pleasantly.

"Wuz he yer brother?" persisted Reddy.

Helen began to be embarrassed. What might not Reddy have seen!

"Not exactly," she answered, "but we have been like brother and sister all our lives, ever since we were boy and girl together."

"I heerd him say, 'Good-night, Helen,' an' I seen him —I seen him—kiss yer hand. Does the West-End fellers

do that when they says, 'Good-night'?" asked Reddy, stumbling miserably over his speech, but determined to know.

Helen was blushing furiously and she was glad her back was to the light from the hall door, Reddy could not see her blushes.

"Oh, not always," she tried to answer carelessly. "It 's rather a foreign custom, but sometimes Americans use it."

Reddy said nothing, but stood looking at her with intense eyes as he twirled his chauffeur's cap in his hands. Helen longed to get rid of him, but she did not want to hurt him.

"You must go home and get dry, Reddy. Good-night," she said at last, extending her hand to him to make her 'good-night' especially friendly.

"Good-night, Miss Seymour," said Reddy gravely, and gravely lifted her hand to his lips.

He dropped it quickly and was down the steps and out of sight before Helen's involuntary, "Oh, no, Reddy! you must n't do that!" could reach him.

Up in her room Helen sat a long time at her dressing-table, gazing into the depths of her mirror. But what she saw there was not the reflection of black-lashed gray eyes shining like stars, golden waves of hair with dancing little ringlets set free by the rain and the wind, and pink-flushed cheeks like flaming roses; she only saw two men lifting her hand to their lips in good-night.

As she thought of one of them her eyes grew brighter and her cheeks flamed hotter and her heart beat quicker; but there was a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye as she thought of Reddy.

CHAPTER VI

SERGEANT CASEY WINKS

THE mingled smiles and tears that the thought of Reddy had brought to Helen's eyes and lips exactly represented her mingled feeling toward him. Everything Reddy did or said had an element of the comic for Helen, or at least the humorous, and she was most likely to laugh when Reddy was most solemn.

But closely allied to the comic vein in him was a vein of sentiment, of romance, that, when she realized the life he was likely to lead and the people with whom he was doomed to associate, seemed to her deeply pathetic. The intense look in Reddy's eyes as he gallantly sought to imitate the "West-End fellers" in his "good-night," seemed to her something too deep for laughter and too high for tears. She began to recognize the soul of chivalry dwelling in Reddy's untutored mind and heart and to recognize, too, the illimitable possibilities of development in such a nature. And realizing all this she determined at once to set about accomplishing her part of Ted's plan for the reinstatement of the prodigal through Reddy.

The little Julie had now been a member of the Sunshine House kindergarten for some days, and when not in a state of ecstasy over the games and plays with her little companions was in a most beatific one in the delight she took in simply looking at her pretty teachers and the

pretty room with its flowering plants in the windows and its pictures on the walls. A whole new set of sensations had been developed in her little soul and life was already broadening out into far-reaching vistas.

Mrs. Paschal usually brought Julie to the kindergarten, but on the Monday morning following Cornelia's tea, Reddy brought her on his truck. It had been a marvel to Helen how such a dainty little creature as Julie—face, hands, hair, and dress always in order—could come out of such a home. But it was even more of a marvel that Reddy should always be so immaculate. As she knew his home, she did not see where he could make a toilet that turned out so thoroughly groomed a young man—clear, ruddy skin, perfectly manicured nails, collar and cuffs spotless, wavy pompadour brushed to the last degree of glossiness. As far as looks went Reddy, in his well-cut second-hand suit, so carefully brushed, would be presentable anywhere.

This morning he looked, if possible, a little more immaculate than usual, but there was a shyness in his eyes Helen had never seen there before.

"Me mother 's not well this mornin'," he hastened to explain, "an' I said I 'd bring Julie to kindergarten. I had an errant in this direction annyhow, and the boss said I could."

This was an artfully framed excuse of Reddy's; Helen was sure of it. His blushes and his careful English proved it. What was she to do to cure him of this romantic folly he had suddenly developed? It was due to his Irish temperament, of course, and the mixture of French blood made it the more exaggerated. She would try to be a little more strictly business-like with him, a

little less friendly, though her heart misgave her as she realized how that would hurt Reddy.

Since he was here, she might as well begin at once on that plan of Ted's; and, Julie having been safely relegated to the care of the two pretty young kindergarten teachers, she invited Reddy to come into her office a moment.

"That is, if you can take the time from work," she added. "Perhaps I 'd better wait until your time is your own."

"Me time 's me own for better 'n half an hour, now," said Reddy, radiating joy from every square inch of his shining face at the prospect of an interview with Miss Seymour. "The boss gave me an hour off an' I ain't used half of it yet."

Helen began by sounding Reddy, as carefully as she knew how, as to whether or not he had any knowledge of his father's family. Reddy had that quick Irish wit to which a hint is often more than is necessary to make one arrive at conclusions. He jumped at this one while Helen was still carefully feeling around to discover the amount of his knowledge.

"Me father 's a gintleman!" he almost shouted. "I allays knowed it!" And he added, with a swift, shy glance and a quick flush: "An' is his blood jest as good as yourn, Miss Seymour?"

"Just as good," Helen answered smilingly, determined to ignore any uncomfortable application of Reddy's words. "The Paschals and the Seymours have always been friends."

The triumphant joy that irradiated Reddy's face at this announcement almost made Helen regret that she

had enlightened him. She had seen enough of the irrational pride of the Irish to make her fear that it might prove Reddy's undoing. But his joy was short-lived. Helen saw his high look droop suddenly, and with lowered lids and a voice of inexpressible sadness he half murmured, "But me mother 's no lady."

Helen was at a loss. She could not deny it—what could she say to comfort him? But Reddy, with his mercurial Irish temperament, was quick to comfort himself.

"P'raps she ain't no lady, Miss Seymour, but she 's a good woman when she laves the drink alone," he said defiantly, with head flung back in a proud gesture Helen had always liked in him. "An' I ain't sure but wat she ain't better 'n Dad. She 'd work her fingers to the bone to kape Julie and me clane an' neat, an' that 's more 'n most o' the mothers round here 'ud do."

Reddy was a boy after her own heart, Helen said to herself. She loved his chivalrous defense of a mother he might easily have found fault with.

"That 's right, Reddy. Love your mother and stand up for her always. You can never be too good to a mother," she said, trying not to be too glowing in her commendation.

"Yes 'm," agreed Reddy, soberly. "And I think mebbe she 's goin' to give up the booze. I ain't seen her at it since you wuz there that evenin'."

So Reddy knew of her visit, and had never spoken of it to her! Another evidence of that innate delicacy of perception that had so often struck her in him. He would not seem to know what she had seemed to wish not known. That he had spoken of it now she knew was a mere inadvertence.

So far Ted's plan had gone smoothly, but when she began to disclose her idea for the reinstatement of his father Reddy's sensitive Irish pride took fire.

Indeed no! If they had let his father go all these years without trying to find him or see if he needed help, Reddy would never be willing that his father and his family should thrust themselves forward now as undesirable connections in need of their charity.

"I 'll put me father on his feet, mesilf, Miss Seymour," said Reddy with flashing eyes. "He 's got a good job, now, and he can allays hev steady wurruk if he 'll lave the liquor. An' I think mebbe both him and me mother hev given it up an' the other night was their last big blow-out. Me mother 's that plazed to hev Julie in kindergarten an' lovin' it so, I thinks mebbe that 'll keep her straight. An' now that I 'm workin' some day we 'll all move out into dacent quarters an' live respectable. An' ye said, Miss Seymour, that a boy hed a chanst to be annything he plazes—mayor, mebbe. Well, ef iver I gits to be mayor I 'll call on me foine relations, but not till thin."

Perhaps Reddy was right. At any rate, there was no moving him from his independent stand and Helen rather admired him for it. She would tell Ted they would have to keep their hands off the Paschals and let Reddy work out their salvation. Reddy's time was up; she must not keep him, and she sent him off with a laughing:

"All right, Mr. Mayor, you shall wait, if you like, until you call at Le Clair Place in your limousine."

It was nearly a week later that Helen sat alone in the sunny office of Sunshine House, thinking of Reddy. She

knew no reason why she should feel uneasy about him, except that he had not dropped in for his regular daily visit the evening before, and little Julie had not appeared at kindergarten that morning. Some of the family must be ill, perhaps Reddy himself; she would go to inquire as soon as her office hours were over.

Then she remembered that Reddy had not seemed very happy lately, and she had attributed it to the fact that she was carrying out her plan of keeping him more strictly on a business plane. His warm Irish temperament needed curbing, and while she was sorry for him she was sure he would get over his hurt soon and be the happier afterward.

Thinking these thoughts, she heard the heavy tread outside that she knew could belong to no one but Sergeant Casey. Instantly she connected his appearance with Reddy's absence the night before and her heart sank within her.

"Good-marnin', Miss," said the sergeant, entering the office with a solemnity of face and manner that confirmed Helen's worst fears.

"Good-morning, Sergeant," she tried to answer brightly. "How 's the hat?"

"Very bad, ma'am," a little twinkle coming into his eyes in spite of his solemnity. "I et it, all right, but it did n't set well an' it 's up agin."

Then Helen knew, and she did n't try to disguise her anxiety.

"What do you mean, Sergeant?"

"I mane ez Misther Carleton's auto wuz run off with, last noight, an' smashed to flinders."

"Do they know who did it?" Helen asked steadily,

but her face blanched in her effort at self-control.

"They knows purty well. That reskul Reddy Paschal wuz seen last noight with Fritz Swartz, goin' into a saloon nigh where the machine was parked, an' he ain't turned up at Brown, Lindsay's this marnin'. I tells the Cap'n I 'll come an' see you fust before we does annything about it; ye 'd be sure to know somethin'. An' the Cap'n says all roight."

"I know nothing at all about it," said Helen, "but I 'm sure Reddy could have had nothing to do with it."

"Don't be too sure, Miss; ye niver know wat thim youngsters 'll be up to, whin they 've had a drap too much."

"But Reddy does n't drink—now," said Helen, helplessly.

"Does n't he, ma'am?" inquired the sergeant, preternaturally solemn.

"But I 'll tell you, Sergeant Casey, what I 'll do. I will go to Reddy's house—you say he is not at Brown, Lindsay's—and if Reddy is there he will tell me whether or not he did it. And if he did, I am sure he will give himself up at once."

"Yes, ma'am," said the sergeant, and fidgeted. "Ye know, Miss, it 's niver well to be too hard on the youngsters," he added apologetically. "An' ye know the force is rether down on that gang an' they hev n't nabbed anny o' thim lately, an' it might go hard with Reddy. You see they 're loikely to nail onto him all the stolen autos they hev n't been able to find in the last six weeks. An'—an'—Reddy's rether a dacent reskil."

Whereupon the sergeant bestowed a solemn and portentous wink upon Helen, who looked at him aghast.

What could he mean? Was he trying to give Reddy a chance to escape? Well, Reddy should not evade justice. If he had done this, he must pay the penalty; and so she told the sergeant with something that the sergeant might have called haughty self-righteousness, if he had ever heard the term. As it was, he looked crestfallen and said with a disappointed air:

"Oh, well, jest as ye loike! I thought p'raps ye moight loike to know."

Whereupon Helen was seized with remorse that she had not sufficiently appreciated or thanked the sergeant for his consideration, and she sent him away beaming and bowing under the weight of the thanks and gratitude she loaded him with.

Then she hurried over to Reddy's.

In answer to her knock the door was opened a crack by Mrs. Paschal and then thrown wide.

They were all there—little Julie in the corner, hugging her doll tightly and looking puzzled and frightened, not at all like the happy Julie of the kindergarten; Mr. Paschal with his head bowed in his hands and not even looking up at Helen's entrance; and Reddy!

Reddy had sprung to his feet as she entered, and stood before her, white and trembling, his eyes searching hers piteously. At the look of stern reproach he met in Helen's eyes he flung his arms above his head with a wild cry, "My God! You!" whirled, and flung himself face downward on an old couch in a corner of the room.

CHAPTER VII

REDDY MAKES A GET-AWAY

FOR a moment Helen was inclined to feel some scorn of an unmanly Reddy who could behave so —theatrically, she called it. Then she remembered he was Irish, and only a boy.

In the last few weeks she had almost forgotten the last fact. Reddy had been taking a man's part, showing himself virtually the head of his father's family, and setting that father "on his feet," as he had promised to do. There had been, also, an indefinable change in his manner toward Helen. He had taken on something of the air of a man of the world. Except for his uncouth speech—and even that was improving under the combined tutelage of Helen and the night-school—she might often have taken him for a man of her own world in his quick repartee and the nice discrimination he showed in never overstepping the bounds in his tentative but daring love-making.

For Helen had had to confess to herself that that was exactly what it was. She had refused to recognize it at first; Reddy's sensitive pride always turned it into mocking jest the moment that he perceived it was displeasing to Helen. None the less she had been forced to believe that there was too much genuine feeling under Reddy's gay Irish chaffing and challenging, and in the last week she had seen as little of him as possible, and then only

amid the safety of numbers. It had been intensely disagreeable to her to have to acknowledge the truth; she had so liked the boy Reddy. And now she wondered if her coldness could by any possibility have been responsible for this tragedy.

For that it was a tragedy was plainly evident—the boy on the lounge, his face buried in a pillow and his long, slim body shaken by dry sobs; the little sister, with the ready tears running down her face, gazing wonderingly and fearfully at the big brother who stood for all that was grandest and finest in her little world; the mother, with her apron over her head, giving voice to a real Irish lament; and the father, who for the first time did not seem despicable in Helen's eyes, his head bowed on his arms and his broad shoulders shaking in sympathy with the sobs of the boy he had learned to be proud of.

Reminding herself once more that it was only a boy, three years younger than herself, and that no fear of any possible misconstruction should deter her from giving him the sympathy and tenderness he so much needed, she moved quickly to his side and laid a gentle hand on his shaking shoulders.

"Reddy, dear," she said quietly, "it 's not so bad as all that. Sit up, won't you? and let us talk it all over. We must decide at once, you know, on what is best to be done."

At almost the first sound of her cool, quiet voice, so pregnant with strength and courage, the convulsive sobbing of the boy began to quiet itself; the child dried her tears and gazed at Helen with round-eyed admiration; the mother took down her apron and stilled her cries, and the father, for the first time, raised his bowed head.

"How did you hear, Miss Seymour?" he asked.

All his magniloquence, the ugly veneer of degradation, had dropped from him like a disreputable garment; he was a courteous gentleman whose air of simple directness might have befitted Le Clair Place.

"Sergeant Casey came to tell me, a few minutes ago," Helen answered him.

At her words Reddy shuddered and his mother uttered a wild cry.

"Sergeant Casey! Thin the police is on his track!" she screamed. "Oh, Reddy, me bye, where kin we hoide ye!"

"Can you tell me what he told you, Miss Seymour?" his father asked, quietly ignoring his wife's wailing.

Helen repeated what the sergeant had told her—that the force was sure they knew who had taken the car; that Fritz and Reddy had been seen going into a saloon near where the car was parked—and at that Reddy, who was sitting up and listening intently, blushed scarlet.

"Why did n't they come and get him, if they think they know?" asked Mr. Paschal.

"The sergeant said he had asked the captain's permission to come and tell me about it before any steps were taken," said Helen.

Reddy sprang to his feet.

"That means he wants me to make a git-away," he exclaimed excitedly. "Sergeant Casey 's sure white."

"Yes, I think he is," said Helen. "But, Reddy," hesitating, "it seems to me the more manly way is to give yourself up and take your punishment."

Reddy stopped short in the excited walk he had begun up and down the room.

"Reddy, dear," she said quietly, "it's not so bad as all that"

"Ye don't mane, Miss Seymour, ye *wants* me to be run in!" Reddy could hardly believe his ears.

"I mean, Reddy, that if you 've done this thing, the only manly way, the only *right* way, is to make all the reparation possible."

"But how kin I? I cain't pay fur it ef I 'm shut up in prison."

"I think it could be arranged. You could be put on probation and work it out. Pay what you can every week until it 's all paid up."

Reddy groaned.

"Ye don't know thim cops, Miss Seymour. They 'll niver let me go, onst they get a-holt o' me. But I 'll do it, ef ye say so."

"Indade, thin, an' ye 'll *not,* Misther Reddy! An' I don't thank Miss Saymour for advisin' ye of it. It 's little she cares if yer rooned intoirely!" and Reddy's mother flashed daggers at Helen out of her Irish blue eyes.

"Be quiet a moment, Eileen," ordered Mr. Paschal, speaking with a tone of command—a tone that it was noticeable his wife always obeyed without question. "Miss Seymour, you said you would like to talk it over. I appreciate, and so does Reddy, the high moral ground you take when you advise him to give himself up. I wish it could be done without injuring—ruining, as his mother says—his whole life. You know what would follow. His picture would be in the rogues' gallery, he would be recorded on the recognized criminal lists of the city, he would be sent to prison or the workhouse. You know what his associations would be in either place. He would come out at the end of six months or two years, if

not a hardened criminal, with his ambitions destroyed, his hopes crushed. No reputable firm would take him on and there would be no career left to him but crime."

"I could niver be mayor, Miss Seymour," said Reddy, with a brave attempt at a jest. But the quivering of his sensitive lips belied the determined twinkle in his eyes, and that quiver went to Helen's heart. She turned to him impulsively and took his hand in both hers.

"Oh, Reddy!" she said, "you must do as you and your father think best. I cannot decide for you, and I don't want your life ruined."

"Ye know wat the cops 'll do to me when they gits me?" said Reddy, irresolute. "They 'll try to make me squeal on the rest o' the boys, an' when they cain't git it out o' me they 'll bate me an' they 'll flog me, till I swound. But I don't mind that, ef *you* think I 'd better give mesilf up."

"Oh, no!" Helen cried, wholly unnerved by this horrible picture Reddy presented. "I can't believe Sergeant Casey would ever do a thing like that."

"Not Sergeant Casey, mebbe; he 's white. But ye don't know the most o' thim cops, Miss Seymour."

"My son 's right, Miss Seymour," interposed Reddy's father. "Their treatment of a prisoner who won't tell is often inhuman. But it 's not for that reason that I don't want him to give himself up; it 's because I don't want his whole life ruined. My own opinion is that Reddy had better get out of the city as quickly and quietly as possible. After he 's gone you and I can see about arranging to pay the damages. I have steady work now, and can make fair monthly payments, and Reddy can get work in some other city and send me monthly

sums to be added to mine. It may be a hard tug; but since my son has once started on the path of rectitude I don't want his life utterly destroyed because he has made this one slip."

Helen had listened intently, her respect for the man growing and deepening with every word he uttered. Reddy was quite overcome.

"No, no, Dad, I 'll pay it all mesilf!" he cried. "I 'll work me fingers to the bone, but ye shan't have the burthen of me sinful debts piled on ye."

But Helen interrupted him.

"Your father is right, Reddy," she said. "It is the only way to save your future. Mr. Paschal, I want to say to you that while I am still a little perplexed as to which way is right, ethically, I am sure that from the broad humanitarian point of view you are right. I see, now, that we cannot always act on the letter of the law, even if it 's a moral law; we must search out the spiritual meanings. And you have found them. God bless Reddy, I say, and bring him out of this a better and a finer man, as I think He will!" And turning quickly: "Reddy, do you know how to make your get-away? You will have to hurry—the police may be here any moment."

Reddy, who had been deeply moved by his father's speech, had been entirely overcome by Helen's; he was weeping, openly and unashamed. So was his mother, and more quietly than was her wont, for something in her husband's manner had overawed her. So was little Julie, though only in sympathy with the others.

"Yes 'm, I can git away all roight," said Reddy, gulping down his sobs. "Mother, will ye make me a bunnel?

Right quick, plaze, an' be sure an' put some bread and mate in it."

Mrs. Paschal flew to do his bidding and Helen seized the moment to ask Reddy how he came to get into such trouble. Reddy hesitated long, and when he spoke at last Helen was quite sure that he was not telling all.

"I don't know wat got into me, Miss Seymour," he began. "Fritz Swartz has often asked me to go into the saloon with 'im an' I niver even wanted to before. Las' noight I did n't care. An' when I onst began to drink, I had n't tasted annything for so long it wint to me head loike. An' when he dared me to run off the auto, stannin' close by, I wuz fool enough to say I 'd take no dares from the loikes o' him. I thought I 'd jes' run round the block and put the auto back in its place before anny one knew 't wuz gone, but the boys kep' guyin' me, an' I jes' had liquor enough not to have any sense. I had a roight not to moind their guyin's, but I did. An' I said I 'd show 'em. An' thin we got to goin' so fast, an' goin' down Indian Hill in the park me brakes would n't work an' we went smash into a tree. There wuz n't nobody hurt an' we all ran before the cops could git us."

Mrs. Paschal came back with the bundle before Helen had time to make any comments, and she did n't wish to be present at Reddy's last farewells to his family. But she had still something she must say to him.

"I 'll wait for you out on the gallery steps, Reddy," she said, as she rose to go. "And then I 'll walk a little way with you."

What his last words with his family had been—fleeing from justice and perhaps never able to return to them—

Helen could not guess, but in ten minutes he came out, looking very piteous.

"Me mother give me her blessin' and me father told me to make a man o' mesilf, an' I sure will!" he burst out, struggling against tears, as he found Helen seated on the last step of the rickety stairway in the deserted yard. With the children all at school, and the men and women at work, there was never any one in the yard at that hour of the day. Reddy had his little bundle buttoned up in his coat and though it made an ugly lump, perhaps it was not so noticeable there as the blue gingham bundle would have been in his hand.

"Reddy, look up!" said Helen.

Hanging over the railing of the top gallery were his father and mother and Julie, waving frantically but silently. Not a word would they utter that might betray Reddy's flight to unfriendly ears. The moment Reddy had caught sight of them and returned the waving as frantically, Mrs. Paschal dragged her husband and Julie back into the room.

"Into the house, wid ye!" she vociferated in a stage whisper that easily reached Helen and Reddy below. "Into the house, I tell ye! Would ye be givin' him the bad luck watchin' him out o' sight?"

In the dim archway Helen stopped.

"Reddy," she said, "we 'll say 'good-by' here. It 's better, perhaps, that we should not be seen coming out of the yard together. And, Reddy," she took his hand and held it close, "I want you to remember that if you ever need a friend, I am ready to help you. And I want you to write me, and let me know where you are and what you are doing."

She would n't detain him; she knew he must be on his way, and she hurried on:

"I want you to take this—it is all I have with me, but it may be a little help to you before you can find any work," and she pressed a ten-dollar bill into his hand.

Reddy was horrified.

"Indade, *no,* Miss Seymour!" he almost thundered. "Me father give me some money an' I 'll allays be able to turn an honest penny, now that I 've onest learned to wurruk. I 'll have none o' yer money."

Helen was in despair. Time was too precious to be spent in argument, but she had visions of Reddy cold and starving for the want of a little money to tide him over until he could make some for himself.

"Reddy, you *must* take it!" She spoke with a note of authority, but she added more gently: "It 's my last wish, Reddy; you can't deny me that. It 's only a loan, you can pay it back—when you 're mayor," with a wan smile at their old jest. "You *must* take it now."

Reddy hesitated. Then with a scarlet face he took the bill and stuffed it into his pocket.

"All right, the queen commands," he said, lifting his hat with something of his old gay grace of manner. "An' I 'll sure write, Miss Seymour. But I 'll never be in no more trouble; don't think it!"

"I know you never will, Reddy, and now, good-by." Helen was in haste to see him safely off, but she added one last word: "If you have learned any good at Sunshine House, remember it and practise it wherever you go. And remember that we are always thinking of you."

The tears were brimming Reddy's eyes. He was white and trembling now, as he had been when he first caught

sight of Helen entering his home. Half afraid, and yet bravely daring, he took the hand she extended to him.

"I 'm not fit to touch ye, Miss Seymour," he said falteringly, "but I hope ye won't moind," and with a reverence not unmixed with passion he bowed low over her hand and lifted it to his lips.

From the archway she watched him turn down the quiet and deserted street, not toward the street of little shops, into which it debouched at one end, but toward one leading to the railway yards, where Reddy intended to steal a ride; for it was not in his notion of making a "get-away" to be paying railway fare.

She watched him until he was about to turn the corner. There Reddy stopped, wheeled quickly, and, seeing her waiting, drew a handkerchief from his pocket—Reddy prided himself on his handkerchiefs, Helen had long since discovered—waved her a last farewell, and hastily disappeared around the corner. He had not even waited for the acknowledgment of her waving hand in response, which rather disappointed Helen, until, as she turned to go back toward Sunshine House she thought she understood why.

"Good-marnin', Miss," said Sergeant Casey, without so much as the flicker of an eyelid, as he attempted to pass her. He had evidently just turned the corner from the street of little shops.

"Oh, good-morning!" said Helen, dazed, but recovering herself quickly. "Is this your beat, Sergeant Casey?"

"No, ma'am; but Sergeant Guffy was n't feelin' quoite hisself the marnin' an' I said I 'd take his bate fur 'im an' let 'im take my place in the office."

And the sergeant bestowed a second slow and solemn wink upon Helen, which this time she understood perfectly.

CHAPTER VIII

GREAT NEWS!

WALKING slowly home to Sunshine House, Helen was once more a prey to all her doubts of the efficacy of social service. Reddy had been in a way her prize asset. She had said to herself many times that the reclamation of such a boy as Reddy was worth all the efforts she had put forth. If Reddy failed her at the first real temptation, was any of it worth while? Could n't she do better work by living her life in the West End, where she belonged, and trying to reclaim one of her own kind?

But this pessimistic vein did not last long with her. Reddy's face when he had repeated to her his father's admonition, adding, "An' I sure will!" and even more the look of determination with which he had declared, "I 'll never be in no more trouble; don't think it," assured her that all was not lost with Reddy.

On entering the office she found a little note on her desk: "Call up Riverside 234." That was the St. Francis Club, she knew; it must be Ted. He had never before left such a message; this must be important. With nerves not very well under control she called up the St. Francis and asked if any one wanted to speak to her.

It was Ted, as she knew it would be.

"I must see you some time to-day, Helen," he said.

"Can I see you there, or, if I call for you, will you go for a drive?"

"What is it, Ted? Has anything happened?"

"I would rather wait to see you. Will you go?"

"I 'll go to drive, yes. Will three-thirty this afternoon be all right?"

"Yes, thank you, Helen."

There was something unusual in the sound of Ted's voice; Helen hardly recognized it. She hung up the receiver with a feeling of uneasiness that, added to the experience of the morning, came near producing a crisis of nerves. She was conscious of a real effort in pulling herself together as she made ready to go down to luncheon.

This was the morning of the third of February. Three days before Germany had sent out to all the world her announcement of unrestricted submarine warfare in a greatly enlarged prohibited zone. The whole country was waiting breathlessly, fearing, hoping, but whether fearing or hoping, trembling, to see what the President would do. And the whole world was waiting, with the effect of standing still in its orbit, to see what America would do. Helen, whose thoughts had been absorbed in the world crisis until the more intimate crisis of Reddy's tragedy had superseded every other thought, wondered vaguely if Ted's telephone message had anything to do with this new horror.

It was with a heart heavily burdened with this new world tragedy and Reddy's tragedy that she met Ted, and prepared herself at the first glance into his face to receive a new burden that might very well prove a crushing one. For, while she could be strong for Reddy, she felt herself to be weak as water for Ted.

They had been rolling south along the river bank for half an hour and were fast leaving the city behind them when Ted broached the matters Helen was waiting and dreading to hear. She could have enjoyed this ride wonderfully if it had not been for her consuming anxiety, for the day was bright and warm, with just a hint of frost in the air, and the river was rolling in a mighty flood twelve miles wide to the bluffs on the other side, racing down to the Gulf and sometimes swirling its brown waters almost into the roadway they were following. She had never seen the river before in flood after a January thaw, for, though Sunshine House was not far from the river, settlement duties had proved too absorbing to leave her any time for sight-seeing.

Their conversation for the first few miles had been confined to the flood, the majesty of it, and the ravages it was committing; but once fairly out of the city, a clear road before them, with no traffic entanglements to look out for, Ted turned to Helen:

"I was coming down to see you to-day, Helen, to tell you my decision. I had decided to go to France."

"To France!" interrupted Helen, breathlessly. "Oh, Ted!"

"Yes," Ted went on, "I have thought of nothing else, day or night, since I saw you last. You stirred me tremendously. I did n't show it, perhaps, but when you said you would be so proud of me if I went in the right spirit I was ashamed of my reasons for going—half a desire for adventure and half to spite you. It was a terrible jolt when you did n't seem to feel bad at the thought of my going, and I think it brought me to my senses. I believe even you might have been satisfied with me, I

began to be devoured with such a burning zeal to help on the great cause, to fight for the right. I was going to give an ambulance to the Allies—that much money, at least, I could command—and I was going over with it to offer my services as driver."

"Oh, Ted!" Helen breathed again, ecstatically.

"But I 'm not going, Helen," he said, uttering each word slowly, and as if the utterance caused him actual physical pain.

Helen could not restrain a quick start as she looked at him with eyes wide with wonder and distress.

"What is the matter?" she managed to articulate at last.

"It would take money to buy an ambulance; it would take money to go to France and support oneself, even without the ambulance; and I have no money," said Ted sternly.

"No money!" gasped Helen. "I don't understand, Ted."

"This morning, Helen, I was up unusually early and my heart was lighter than it 's been in a long time. At last I believed you could approve of me and I could approve of myself—for I 've never been any better satisfied with myself than my friends have been with me. I had an eight-o'clock breakfast and I was called from the breakfast table to see Mr. Grant, who has had charge of the law business of the estate. He told me that he was rung up from police headquarters before daylight this morning and informed that Mr. Bruenig—that 's my trustee, you know—had disappeared, and it was believed that he had embezzled all the trust funds of the estate. I left my breakfast unfinished and went down with Mr.

Grant and we have spent the morning in Bruenig's office and getting permits to open safes and safe-deposit boxes. As far as we can see the fellow has made a clean sweep. There is a little real estate left that he was not able to dispose of, but that was only because it was of so little value it was not worth the trouble. I am a ruined man, Helen—as poor, nearly as poor, as your special pet Reddy."

He had tried to make light of his misfortune, as he finished his long recital, but Helen could not smile at his pitiful attempt at a jest. She was much nearer tears.

They talked the matter over in all its possible ramifications. Helen was unwilling to believe that a comfortable remnant of Ted's great fortune could not be found to have been overlooked, but Ted had no such hope.

"You know what I think, Helen? I believe the fellow has been using my money for German propaganda—you know how much of it there has been in the city—until he has used most of it up. I suppose he thought all was fair in war. And now, since the announcement of the ruthless submarine war, he has grown frightened, converted the rest of it into money, and fled for Germany before war should be declared. He need n't have been so scared," Ted added bitterly; "we 'll never declare war."

"I 'm not so sure, Ted."

"I am. What do you suppose this ominous silence from the White House these last three days means? It means that the President is concocting another note to Germany to enable us to wriggle out of war."

"Ted! What makes you so bitter?" Helen resented these aspersions of his, hotly. "I would like to wager

you that there will be a declaration of war, or something very like it, before another three days are over."

"Oh, I am sick of the whole business!" groaned Ted. "And just as I thought that I was going to chuck it all and get into real living—or dying, most likely—Bruenig runs off with my money and leaves me stranded."

And this time Ted actually groaned.

"I have a plan!" said Helen.

"What is it?" asked Ted, indifferently.

"I 'll buy the ambulance and finance you in France."

Ted turned and looked at her blankly, the slow color mounting to the roots of his brown curls, and turning his pink cheeks to swarthy red.

"You!" he gasped.

"Yes; why not? I 've been cudgeling my brains to find a way to do my part, and here it is."

"No, I thank you! I 'm something of a feminist and daily growing a little more of one, but I 've not quite arrived at being supported by a girl."

"Ted!" Helen exclaimed hotly. "You 're horrid! It 's *not* supporting you! It 's sending a substitute to the great war because I can't go myself. No, listen to me," as Ted tried to interrupt. "Put yourself in my place. Suppose I had suddenly lost all my money, and I had set my heart on going to France and doing something there; would n't you be the first to offer to finance me? And should n't I think you were perfectly right? What are old friends good for?"

"It 's different," said Ted, moodily.

"Not a bit different!" But she got nowhere with her argument. Ted was as stubborn as he had often accused Helen of being.

They were still in the thick of it when they came in sight of Washington Barracks, beautiful for situation on its wooded bluffs overlooking the Great River. There were no leaves on the trees, but there were enough tall cedars and Norway firs and Colorado spruces, scattered among the naked gray stems of maples and elms, to relieve the barrenness of the landscape; and the grass was already turning green on the southern slopes.

"Shall we drive in?" asked Ted.

"Yes, do!" said Helen. "We must be just in time for retreat."

They drove through the beautiful grounds, where soldiers in khaki loitered from barracks to barracks, or gossiped on the steps as they warmed themselves in the fast departing rays of the setting sun, and came opposite the commandant's house just as the bugles sounded for retreat and the commandant stepped out of his house with his officers around him.

"Go into the house; Mrs. Barton will be glad to see you," he said, shaking hands cordially with both and hurrying away. He must not be a moment late, and the sun was already racing down the western sky.

But they did not accept his invitation. Instead they stood and watched the beautiful ceremony, both of them at salute as Old Glory came floating gracefully down. Then they saw that the troops, instead of marching off in platoons as usual, were standing at attention, and Colonel Barton was addressing them. At that distance they could hear his voice, though not his words, but the moment his voice ceased there were ringing cheers, and wild huzzahs, and tossing of caps in the air, and ranks breaking into confusion.

"I 've a mind to enlist," said Ted. "If I were sure we should get in the war, I would. It 's all tremendously inspiring."

"And it 's wonderful to think of this beautiful ceremony going on all over the land at the same hour," said Helen.

"I wonder what they 're shouting about," said Ted, curiously.

And then the commandant came up, at a little quicker pace than seemed quite consonant with his dignity.

"What 's the excitement?" Ted called to him.

"Great news! Great news! I did n't have time to tell you before retreat," said the colonel, rubbing his hands, and smiling all over his fine face. "The President addressed Congress this afternoon and announced that relations with Germany are broken off. And *Bernstorff has his passports!*"

CHAPTER IX

TED DECIDES

HELEN lay long awake, that night of February third, wondering if now she dared tell Ted she would marry him and share her little fortune with him.

There were several reasons why she did not quite dare. First and foremost, perhaps, was the fact that Ted had made no effort at love-making on that long ride. Helen thought she understood that: a man who has just lost his fortune is unwilling to ask a girl who has a little money of her own to marry him.

"That 's the reason why I should do the asking," Helen argued to herself, tossing sleeplessly on her narrow white bed. "And if we are to be emancipated, is n't that to be one of our rights?"

But her use of the word recalled to her something she had once heard Ted say: "In all this discussion of Woman's Rights there is one right men will always reserve to themselves—the right to do the wooing." Ted would no doubt be horrified, repelled, perhaps disgusted, should she even hint, no matter how delicately, at such an offer.

And then, in the last analysis, she was not sure of her own heart. Ted was very dear to her and had been for years; but was n't what she felt for him more of a sisterly

affection, perhaps, than anything else? The man of her dreams, her girlish ideal, was a manly man, a strong man; and Ted had not proved himself that.

But perhaps he was beginning to prove himself so. Certainly he seemed to have taken his terrible reverses in rather a strong way. He would do all he could to recover his fortune. The police had wired New York to watch every outgoing steamer and had wired a description of the fugitive to every city of importance in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Especially were the Guards, still on sentinel duty at the Border—though Pershing with his twelve thousand was on his way out of Mexico—to be on the lookout for him: that was the safest route to Germany. Grant, Ted's lawyer, would leave no stone unturned, also.

"But when all 's said and done," said Ted, lightly, "I never expect to see any of my money again, and I shall not cry over spilt milk. I 'll get me a 'job'; and then you, at least, will be happy."

"Yes, I shall," answered Helen, "but I want you to get your money back, too. Think what you could do with it!"

"As I said before, I don't believe I have any money," said Ted. "I believe it 's been all used up, on German propaganda. That 's what makes me sore! If I could only have given it to the Allies or put it into munition plants and made a lot of shells to send against the Kaiser before I lost it, I should n't feel so sick over it. This is what comes of having money in trust!"

"Don't, Ted!"

"Oh, Dad thought he was doing exactly the right thing; I 'm not finding fault with him. I had n't shown

myself very trustworthy, I suppose. Only, I don't approve the system."

As the days went on after that great speech in Congress, which both Congress and the nation received with wild acclaim, it began to be very certain that the breaking of relations would be followed, and that very soon, by a declaration of war. Things happened in those two months before the President once more addressed Congress, as in his speech of February third he had intimated he would do, on still graver matters. Preparations for defense were rushed along the coast line; heavy wire nets were sunk at the mouth of New York Harbor, at the entrance to Hampton Roads, and at the delta of the Mississippi. On February twelfth Congress, forgetting for once its tactics of delay, passed a big naval appropriation bill and gave the President blanket authority to commandeer shipyards and munition plants. The nation was at fever heat, and it added greatly to the tenseness of the situation that Germany was ruthlessly carrying out her dire threat of unrestricted submarine warfare. In the first eighteen days of February a hundred and seventeen ships, of all nations, were sunk—torpedoed without warning. Those who had hoped against hope that Germany would retract and the nation be saved from the horrors of war, now gave up all hope, and many of the honest pacifists of 1916 became most zealous for war measures in 1917.

Everywhere the youth of the nation was drilling; on college campuses, in city parks, on village greens, along the boulevards, everywhere, were the quick tramp of marching feet and the sharp command shouted by youthful voices. The mothers of America knew then, even be-

fore war was declared, that they had lost their boys, who were swarming from schools, and colleges, and offices, and factories, to National Guard armories, to Aviation fields, to Coast Guard stations.

Ted had telephoned Helen on the evening of their drive that he was just leaving for New York. From clues the detectives had secured it was certain Bruenig had gone east, and Grant recommended that Ted should go on to New York; he might help the detectives there.

Ted himself felt quite sure that Bruenig would try to get away with Bernstorff's party; no doubt he had been helping Bernstorff substantially, with Ted's money, to carry out his various nefarious plans and the ambassador would strain a point to help him make a safe "get-away."

It was wonderful to Helen how forsaken the city seemed with Ted and Reddy both away. She was not surprised that she missed Reddy, for she had been seeing him every day for weeks and had grown to look forward to a glimpse of his bright face as a special little ray of sunshine all her own. But Ted she seldom saw, and very seldom heard from; that the city should seem dull just because he was not in it seemed unreasonable to her, and yet she had to confess that even the work she so joyed in was beginning to pall upon her and grow monotonous.

She very soon began to receive post-cards from Reddy; one from each town of any size he passed through, or where he spent a few days looking for work, but no word came from Ted. She said to herself she had not expected him to write; but she was conscious of a quick sinking of

the heart every time the mail came in and brought her nothing from New York.

She took herself roundly to task for this, but the fact remained that she was dull and moping, and had to make a sensible exertion to appear always in the bright spirits deemed so necessary to settlement work—and which the settlement worker seems never to fail in maintaining, no matter how hard and grinding her work or how discouraging the results.

She had gone, early on the Monday morning following Reddy's "get-away," with Mr. Paschal to police headquarters and thence to the Juvenile Court to arrange for paying the damage on the Carleton car. It was most fortunate, as it turned out, that they had been so prompt; for they were both able to say truthfully that they had no idea of Reddy's whereabouts: they knew only that he was out of the city. The police were inclined to grumble; evidently they would rather get their prisoner than have the damages paid. But the judge of the Juvenile Court looked at the matter differently, and it was finally arranged that Reddy's father was to pay ten dollars a week until all arrears were settled.

Helen knew that this would make a heavy drain on Mr. Paschal's weekly income, and his family would have to suffer, but by no arguments that she could bring to bear could she prevail upon him to let her share his burden. No, Reddy would help as soon as he found work, and this was their affair. What Helen really wanted was to be allowed to pay the whole amount in a lump sum; then Reddy and Mr. Paschal could repay her at their leisure. But to this Mr. Paschal would not listen

for a moment and Helen began to feel a real respect for the man who had at first seemed odious to her in his veneer of sham gentility. The most that she secured from him was the promise that if he ever found himself unable to meet a payment he would come to her for a loan to tide him over until he could meet the payments himself and repay her.

Reddy's post-cards were a real ray of sunshine in these troubled days. They were thoroughly characteristic, always beginning, "Respected Friend," and ending, "Yours till death, Reddy." The contrast between his beginnings and his endings were like the contrasts that were always cropping out in his character, his temperament, and his manners. He was by turns a rough gang-leader, a daring adventurer, a polished courtier, an ardent admirer, a passionate lover.

There was never much information in his post-cards, but some sentence always managed to reveal his ardent longing for his home town, and very often a feeling that he would rather come back and be "run in" than be always a wanderer so far from everybody he cared for.

For Reddy never seemed to stay in any one town, whether from fear of the police or not Helen could not determine; and how he was to get work and begin to help his father with his debt she could not see. Then one day there came a letter, instead of a postal, from a far northern town. Enclosed was a dollar bill and the brief legend:

RESPECTED FRIEND:
First payment on account. Made it sawing wood.
Yours till death,
REDDY.

The "account," of course, was the ten dollars she had forced on him and she believed this was the very first dollar he had been able to earn. That he should send it to her instead of to his father distressed her, but she was helpless in the matter.

Ted had been gone a little over three weeks when Helen took up the receiver of the telephone one day, in answer to a ring, and heard his voice on the wire:

"Just home from New York. Will you go driving with me this afternoon?"

Helen would have gone to the ends of the earth with him at that moment, had he asked her, and came near telling him so, so great was her surprise and delight at hearing his voice once more. Of course she would go, and promptly at two Ted appeared in his roadster.

"It 's my last drive, Helen; I 've sold it," he said as they started off; and Helen hardly knew whether to sympathize with him or praise him.

Ted gave her no chance for either praise or sympathy.

"I 've seen Bruenig," he said abruptly.

"Bruenig! Is he caught?"

"No, worse luck!"

"But how in the world did you see him?"

"I 'll tell you: it 's a long story. You know the Fleischers in New York?"

"Slightly. I 've met Mrs. Fleischer. She 's Mrs. Hartmann's sister; is n't she?"

"Yes, and she 's always been very kind to me. I like her; though, naturally, before the rupture in relations her sympathies were all pro-German—probably are yet, for all I know."

"I can't help feeling sorry for them—the German-

Americans,'' Helen interrupted. ''It 's the most natural thing in the world that their sympathies should be with Germany; and yet I believe they are loyal Americans. I wonder what they will do now.''

''The Lord only knows! I 'm sorry for them, too. And there are a lot of them I like immensely, Mrs. Fleischer is one. She 's a great friend of Bernstorff's, you know; he makes her house kind of headquarters in New York. I always call on her when I 'm in the city, and though I did n't feel much in the humor for calling, I did it, just the same, and was richly repaid. She invited me to a farewell reception she was giving Bernstorff.''

''Bernstorff! You did n't go, did you?''

''Of course I did. I was glad of the chance to get a good look at the rascal, though I hated the idea of having to shake hands with him. As it turned out I did n't, though.''

''How could you help it?''

''Just wait a minute. You know we have kept this Bruenig affair out of the papers. Grant and the detectives all thought it was wise to do so. Mrs. Fleischer never dreamed I was a penniless beggar; perhaps if she had she would n't have been so insistent on my coming to her reception. She invited me to dinner, too, but I could n't go. She is always rather throwing Bernice at my head.''

''Oh, the conceit of you men!''

''Not at all. If she considers me a good *parti* for her daughter—and I suppose my millions were not to be sneezed at—she is perfectly right in trying to bring us together.''

"Perhaps so. But get on with your tale, Othello. Mine ears do tingle with deferred desire."

"Is that Shakspere?"

"Sounds like it; does n't it? But hurry up, please."

"Oh, there 's no hurry," said Ted, maddeningly deliberate. "We 've a long afternoon before us."

"Oh, Ted, don't be exasperating!" begged Helen, who knew how he liked to tease. "*How* did you see Bruenig?"

"Well," Ted meandered on, "I went to the reception. And I wish you could have seen the crowd of rich New Yorkers there. It looked to me as if the whole city had turned out to do Bernstorff honor; but I suppose most of them were Germans or of German descent. I got a place where I could get a good look at him before I went up to speak to Mrs. Fleischer and be presented. And I tell you, Helen, he 's about as good-looking a man as you often see. He carries himself like a prince! and he has magnificent eyes: large, clear, piercing. I don't wonder the women are crazy about him."

"Are they?"

"Of course they are—New York women, anyhow. I decided it was time for me to make my bow and I had almost reached Mrs. Fleischer—she had seen me coming and smiled at me—when I caught sight of Bruenig standing almost behind Mrs. Fleischer and talking to Bernice. He caught sight of me at the same moment and I thought the fellow would faint. I could n't help a quick—you know—at sight of him, the last place in the world I would have expected to see him, and I darted toward him. Reception or no reception, I was not going to lose him when the Fates had dropped him into my hands.

But somebody got in my way—it was an awful crush—and when I managed to push through again, he was n't there, and Bernice was talking to a little fellow with a *kaiserlich* mustache—just out of college, I should think.

"I must have looked dazed at this sudden transubstantiation and I had to pull myself together and remind myself that I must n't create a disturbance at Mrs. Fleischer's reception. So I made my bow to Bernice and when we had got through with the frivolities I asked, as nonchalantly as I could, 'Did n't I see you talking to my friend Bruenig, from home, just now?' 'Bruenig?' said she, 'I don't remember any Mr. Bruenig.'' And then I was convinced he had told Bernice some tale why he did not wish to meet me, and she was trying to shield him. I was indignant with her for trying to put it over me that way; Bernice and I have always been good pals'' —Helen winced at his use of the term she had believed belonged to her alone—''but just at that moment her mother called me to her. 'I want to present you to Count von Bernstorff,' she said. 'Ambassador, this is Mr. Jarvis, an old friend of mine.' 'I was just coming to be presented,' I said, 'when I caught a glimpse of an old acquaintance, Mr. Bruenig, from home. Do you know him your Excellency?'

"He had been in the very act of extending his hand,'' Ted went on, ''when he heard my name and hesitated, and when I mentioned Bruenig a deep red rushed up to his very eyes. But he recovered himself in a moment. 'Bruenig?' he said coldly, 'I don't know any one of that name here.' 'He was just talking to Miss Fleischer,' I persisted, 'but when I came up he was gone.' 'Oh, that was Herr von Hauser,' said Mrs. Fleischer, perfectly

innocently, I am convinced. 'He is a member of the ambassador's party.' I looked straight into von Bernstorff's eyes and he tried his best to look straight into mine; but he flinched and turned red when I murmured nastily, 'An extraordinary resemblance!' "

"Oh, how exciting!" Helen interposed breathlessly. "*What* did the ambassador do?"

"Do! He bowed coldly and murmured, just as nastily, 'Possibly,' and I excused myself as soon as I could and went off to tell the detectives that Bruenig was in von Bernstorff's party."

"You surely got him?"

"No, we did n't. I believe the detectives used every means humanly possible; but they could get no trace of either Bruenig or von Hauser. The ambassador told them, very affably, that certainly he knew Mr. von Hauser, but he did not know where he was staying in the city. As to Bruenig, he pretended never to have heard the name."

"Oh, the villain!" Helen was almost too indignant for utterance.

"Yes, he 's a villain, all right, but he 's a terribly smart one. We left no stone unturned. The detectives worked hard until the very day of the sailing of the *Frederick Eighth.* I was down at the dock and so were the detectives. So also were all the New York Germans, Mrs. Fleischer and Bernice among the number. You 've never seen such a send-off as they gave von Bernstorff. Flowers, fruit—bah! it was sickening!"

"And was n't Mr. Bruenig with him?" Helen interrupted again.

"We could n't get a trace of him. The detectives

were all through the ship, looking for anything contraband, ostensibly, but they saw no one who answered to his description or looked like his picture. And then, just after the boat started—I was standing beside Bernice Fleischer—I saw him come to the rail and wave to her. 'Who was that?' I asked her, so sternly I think she must have thought I was jealous. 'Oh, that man?' she answered innocently. 'That was Mr. von Hauser, one of the ambassador's family.'

"I had to go up-town with the Fleischers—I had promised them to go to dinner—but I nabbed one of the detectives on the dock and told him I had seen Bruenig on deck, just after the boat started, and to wire the Halifax police to get him. After that I felt so sure of him, I went to dinner with the Fleischers very comfortably, had a jolly evening, took a midnight train, and raced for Halifax. I was there long before the *Frederick Eighth* came in and had all my wires laid. My detectives I had brought on from New York were to search the boat with the police who were searching for contraband—I was sure of him, that time. The officials assured me no one would be allowed to leave the ship: he would certainly be caught. I was on the dock when the boat came in and I was on the dock every day of its tedious stay, and the only person that left the ship was a young American lady's-maid, who had thought that she would like to go to Germany with her mistress but had grown so homesick on her trip to Halifax that the ambassador himself—out of the kindness of his heart?—requested permission of the Halifax official to allow her to land and go back to the States."

"Could she have been Bruenig?" Helen asked quickly.

"I wish I had been as quick-witted as you! I never thought of it, and neither did any one else, until it was too late. But when I remembered that Bruenig is a slender fellow and not over five-feet-eight and fair, and could easily make up as a lady's-maid, I was sure it was he. I told my suspicions to the authorities, but it was too late. She had been conducted straight to a train for New York and now, though I 've been hanging around New York for days, we can get no trace of her."

"Him, you mean."

"Yes, him. The police are instructed to look out for a woman answering to his description on every out-bound steamer; and that 's about all we can do. I never expect to see him again."

Their drive had not been by the side of the Great River this time, but straight west, far into the county, among the picturesque foot-hills of the Arkmores. As Ted finished his long and dramatic recital they drew up on the banks of La Belle Rivière, rushing, full-breasted after the floods, in swift curves between its high wooded bluffs down to the Great River. They stopped a few minutes to enjoy the wintry view, the gray stems of the bare trees making lovely etchings against the winter sky, and the swift river rushing swiftly and silently among its hills.

"I own some land around here," said Ted, "unless Bruenig sold it and pocketed the price. I always intended building a country home here some day. It 's the most beautiful spot in the county, to my mind."

"And to mine. I hope you have n't lost it."

"Oh, I could n't afford to build a house of any kind now," said Ted, lightly—"certainly not one to compete with the county magnates'."

They were silent a moment. Helen was feeling acute sympathy for his loss and had no words in which to express it.

"Have you decided what you will do now, Ted?" she asked at last.

"Almost, but not quite," he answered with apparent indifference. "I 'll let you know as soon as I decide. By the way, Helen, I came home by Washington and heard the President make one of his great speeches."

"Oh!" breathed Helen. "How I should love to hear him! I suppose it was about arming merchant vessels?"

"Yes, and I want to say, right now, I take off my hat to him. He has a level head and in these three weeks he has set things going in a wonderful fashion. Why, you would n't know Washington! The big men of the country are pouring into it from all sides, either summoned by the President or coming of their own will to offer their services or their industries to the country. I tell you, Helen, it 's perfectly wonderful the way the country has roused itself, like a lion from sleep, since that speech of his on the third. You know I did n't use to admire him very much: I was so impatient with him for what I thought were his dilatory tactics. I believe on my soul now he was right. The country was n't ready for war, before. But it 's ready now, good and ready!"

Ted spoke with an ardor that delighted Helen. She had always, heretofore, resented his attitude toward the President.

"At last, Ted! I 'm glad," she said. "You never seemed before to have any sympathy with his terrible perplexities, that must have been overwhelming at times, and the awful weight of responsibility that he bore on

his shoulders—enough to crush any ordinary man."

"No," said Ted, "I did n't. But I do now. Why, he 's the great man of the hour! And the world so regards him."

Helen was called to the telephone from her luncheon the next day and again it was Ted on the wire.

"Hello, Helen," he called. "I 'm down at Washington Barracks."

Helen's heart beat fast. She had thought she divined what Ted meant when he said on their drive that he had almost decided what he was going to do; and she was not sure whether it was fear or joy that set her heart beating so tumultuously that she could hardly control her voice to reply steadily:

"Washington Barracks!"

"Yes, I 've enlisted. High private in the rear ranks. I 've been sure, ever since I heard the President, that there 's going to be war, and *I want to be in it!*"

CHAPTER X

PRIVATE JARVIS

HELEN had a note from Colonel Barton the next morning:

Come down and take luncheon with Mrs. Barton and me. I don't like this about Ted Jarvis. He ought n't to go into the army in this fashion. But, anyway, come down and we 'll talk it over. We will send for you.

Your devoted admirer,
JOHN BARTON

That was what he always called himself—her admirer—and Helen smiled at the signature.

But she was a little disturbed by the contents of the note. She had felt much the same way—that Ted ought to have waited a little and gone in finally as an officer. There could be no doubt that a commission could be easily secured for him, since he had been for three years a lieutenant in the National Guard. He was not in the National Guard now, but his experience ought to count for something. Though she said to herself she was prouder of him as a private now than she would have been as an officer later; for he was the very first of the city's young men to rush to the colors, even before the call had been made.

She telephoned Mrs. Barton not to send for her. She would not be able to tell until the last moment when she

could come, and she would have to take her chance of not finding Mrs. Barton at home. The colonel was always there. But, as it happened, one of the residents, returning from a vacation before her time was up, gave her a chance unexpectedly soon, and the very next day saw her taking the long trolley ride she loved, most of it in sight of the Great River, still rushing at flood tide down to the Gulf. It was warm enough for the car windows to be open and she had the front seat. It was quite as good as a motor-ride, she said to herself, with no one in front of her to obstruct her vision. And she drew in with delight, long, deep breaths of the spring-like air, fresh from the river; for the air in the purlieus of Sunshine House was not always either fresh or fragrant.

Mrs. Barton was at home and Helen had visions of a lovely homey little visit before the colonel should come in. The colonel's wife was mother to a great many young people—young wives at the barracks, young officers with no wives, and some of the motherless girls and young men of the city whose mothers she had known—and heading this list were Ted Jarvis and Helen Seymour. She was never quite sure which of the two held the first place in her affections; but she had a daughter, Janie, and she had no son, which gave Ted a little the supremacy. Helen did not know she was not first and she might have been a little jealous if she had known; for she could not remember her mother, and Mrs. Barton had been the only mother she had ever known.

Janie was at home, too, and Janie was a great friend to both Helen and Ted. It was Janie who broached the topic of the day.

"I 'm so mad at Ted, Helen! Why do you suppose he

did it?" she blurted out before Helen had her wraps off.

"Mad! I think it was fine—the finest thing I 've ever known Ted to do! Where 's your patriotism, Janie?"

"Oh, of course, it 's fine to enlist, but as a private in the regular army! Why did n't he go back into his old regiment in the Guards?"

"I don't know, but I 've an idea he wanted to do something that he thought would be hard—something unpleasant, maybe. He wanted to be a part of the real thing."

"The National Guard will be the real thing if there 's ever any war."

"What 's the matter, Janie?" her mother interposed. "It strikes me you are rather hard on Ted."

"Well, it seems to me such an ill-considered thing to do. I can never have him at the house any more."

Helen and Mrs. Barton laughed.

"Poor Ted!" said Helen.

"An excellent reason for not enlisting," said Mrs. Barton. "Never mind, Janie; I feel a little as you do. I wish Ted had come and talked it over with us first. We would have advised him to wait and get a commission. But private or no private, I shall certainly have Ted at the house."

"Oh, yes, for private talks and motherly lectures, I suppose," said Janie, determined to be in opposition, "but I can never have him to dinner-parties, with the girls and officers."

"I 've an idea that if we get into the war we sha'n't be having many dinner-parties," said her mother.

"No dinner-parties!" exclaimed Janie, to whom such

a condition of affairs had not once suggested itself. The idea of war had been a rather pleasurably exciting one thus far.

"They will have to be manless dinners," said Helen, "if all the men are in France."

"But think of Ted with all his millions bunking in with those rough, coarse men!" Janie returned to Ted as a more satisfactory topic than a war that was to leave her dinnerless. "And I have always thought of Ted Jarvis as a real Sybarite," she added.

"It will be hard on him," agreed her mother. "I wish he had n't been quite so rash."

Helen was silent. Evidently they had not heard that Ted had no longer any millions, very likely no thousands.

"Why don't you say something, Helen? You 're determined not to find fault with him," remonstrated Janie.

But just then the colonel came in and saved her the necessity of answering, greeting her in the fatherly fashion she loved and with the fine courtliness of an officer of the old régime.

At the luncheon-table Ted was hardly mentioned. Their talk was of the new ships torpedoed, two of them American, and of the rushing preparations for war, and the new song every one was singing—"Your Flag and My Flag"—and what "The Mad Dog of Europe," as O'Connor had just called the Kaiser in the *London Chronicle,* would do next.

It had been a delicious little luncheon and seemed particularly so to Helen, for the fare at Sunshine House was necessarily simple, and the cook was no chef. She could never have given them, even if the materials had

been provided her, a delicious hors-d'œuvre to begin with; a mushroom bouillon, brown and rich and with an island of whipped cream floating on top, to follow; sweetbreads à la Creole, with dainty brioches, as a course de resistance; the simplest of salads—grape-fruit and lettuce—but with a French dressing that was perfection, and served with a toasted cheese sandwich made of biscuit that would melt in the mouth; and a demi-tasse of coffee, to finish with, such as Sunshine House had never dreamed of.

"There are some drawbacks to settlement work," said Helen whimsically, as she sipped her coffee with the keen appreciation of a coffee lover. "We can never have anything good to eat. I don't know why Cook does n't make better coffee. We buy her the best and every one of us has tried her hand at teaching her; but it never has a bit of aroma."

"I think you 're just as foolish as Ted, to live the way you do, and work the way you do," said Janie, hotly. "Come back up-town, Helen, live like white folks, and have a good time."

"Helen believes in the Master's dictum," said the colonel in his courtly way. "Thou shalt not live by bread alone."

Helen flushed at such an encomium, but she answered him only with a glance of appreciation. It was Janie she replied to:

"I do have good times—more of them, I 'll venture to say, than most of the girls up-town—and I don't have the bother they have in dressing up for them; to say nothing of the bother of shopping and dressmakers."

"But that 's a kind of bother I love! I adore shop-

ping and I adore dressing for parties. I should think you would miss all that dreadfully."

"I believe Janie does adore it," said Mrs. Barton, with the indulgent smile of an indulgent mother of a pretty daughter. "She has to dress for two parties to-day.—You 'd better go right up-stairs now, Janie, and get your beauty nap."

"All right, Mother, I will," Janie responded cheerfully. "I have to leave here a little after three, Helen, and that does n't give me much time for a nap and dressing both. Will you be ready to go as early as that? I have to take the limousine, you know."

"I 'll be ready. Do you mind telling me what your two parties in Lent are?"

"Oh, they 're perfectly proper Lenten dissipations—a quiet little tea at the Paschals for Evelyn Bidwell—she 's here from Philadelphia, you know, and I 'm to pour—and then a quiet little dinner afterward. If we turn on the victrola after dinner and dance a little, that won't be wrong; will it, Mother, as long as it 's in a private house?"

"I suppose not, but I had n't heard of the dancing. She 's to stay at the Paschals' all night, Helen, and I sha'n't have to do any chaperoning. I 'm always glad when I don't have to go in town and sit up nearly all night and come home alone with Janie in the ghostly hours. I can hardly ever persuade John to go with me, and I am always sure we 'll be held up; it 's such a lonely drive."

"Why, my dear!" said the colonel, quickly; "you never said before that you were afraid. I did n't think it very dignified for an old soldier to be dancing attend-

ance at balls; but if you 're afraid, I will certainly go with you hereafter, or send an orderly."

Janie and her mother both laughed.

"It will be the orderly, Helen," Mrs. Barton said, with a smile at her husband. "John loves his pipe and his book too well. He 'd rather send a whole platoon than have his peace disturbed."

"And he knows Mother was only trying to 'draw' him," Janie chimed in. "She 's the most absolutely fearless woman in the army, and I 'm her daughter. We 're neither of us a bit afraid."

"Nevertheless," said the colonel, looking very stately and ignoring his wife's and daughter's chaffing, "I believe I 've been too careless heretofore, and I shall hereafter always send an orderly with you when you are in town for the evening. There are too many hold-ups of late."

This time it was Mrs. Barton who was teased. She disliked exceedingly driving around in state with an orderly beside the chauffeur. The colonel knew he had the best of his wife and he took Helen into his confidence by bestowing upon her a sly wink.

"Well, I 'm off," said Janie. "Au revoir till three o'clock, Helen. It 's just too bad Ted can't be at the Paschals' dinner. He never misses anything at the Paschals' and Genevieve will be disconsolate."

Helen did n't know why she should wince at Janie's hint that Ted was devoted to Genevieve Paschal. She knew very well that Ted had been hers for the taking for at least three years. Nevertheless she did wince, and for a moment she thought of herself as Janie had called her, "as foolish as Ted." The pretty room, the de-

licious lunch, the little domestic scene of chaffing that was too palpably loving, all made her a little homesick. She liked all the niceties of living; she could very easily be as much of a Sybarite as Janie claimed Ted to be. She even liked the pleasures of the palate, when they were as delicately seasoned and as daintily served as Mrs. Barton's luncheon had been. Why had she given them all up? Had any girl ever liked parties and dancing better than she had once liked them?—yes, and pretty clothes, too?

She had to pull herself together and remind herself that she had grown deadly tired of them all in the three years from the time she made her début until she took her great determination to devote herself to settlement work. She reminded herself, also, of the compensating joys: the bright faces of the boys and girls—alas, Reddy's would no longer be one of them!—the ardent devotion of these warm-hearted young people and of the tired mothers, into whose dreary lives she was often able to bring a ray of sunshine. Yes, and the greater things: the reclaiming of many a drunkard; the saving of families; the reuniting of husbands and wives; the bettering of conditions generally; the inspiring of listless and hopeless souls with hope and ambition. Oh, it was a glorious work! and she would not go back to the old frivolous life for worlds.

She looked up half dazed—she had been dreaming—and found Mrs. Barton gone and the colonel regarding her curiously. He glanced quickly away as she looked up.

"Mrs. Barton has left us to have our talk about Ted," he explained, "though I believe that 's only an excuse.

I think she wanted to see that Janie had everything she needed in her suit-case. A poor colonel can't afford a lady's maid for his wife and daughter."

He had given Helen time fully to recover herself. She had been much embarrassed to be discovered woolgathering.

"And what about Ted?" she asked.

"I saw him this morning. He told me of the loss of his fortune and he says you know all about it. I didn't mention it before Janie—you can't always trust the discretion of these young people—and Ted says the detectives are keeping it quiet, hoping to trap their man."

Helen smiled inwardly at the differentiation Colonel Barton evidently made in his mind between her and Janie. Was she beginning to seem to every one a staid old woman? She and Janie were almost exactly of an age.

"Yes, Ted told me," she answered soberly.

"Too bad! too bad!" ejaculated the colonel, sympathetically.

"I'm not so sure," said Helen. Whereat the colonel opened his eyes.

"What 's that! what 's that! Not sure it 's too bad?"

"No, it may be the making of him. I always thought Ted would have been a fine fellow if he had n't been a rich man's son."

"I thought you thought him a fine fellow as he is," said the colonel demurely.

"I think he 's fine now. I think this enlisting was the very finest thing any man could do. But I have n't always thought him fine."

"But I got you down here to help me to persuade him out of it!"

"Out of enlisting? You invited the wrong person."

"Out of enlisting as private in the regular army. It 's a little different from being a volunteer in war times. As a volunteer you are right in with men of your own kind; but the regular army in times of peace is made up of men who have gone into it as a profession, a trade, not from any specially patriotic motive. And many of them, though they are good fellows, are not at all the kind Ted would enjoy being associated with."

"Has Ted shown any signs of regret?"

"None. I 've been trying to persuade him this morning to let me get him off—I know I can do it—but he 's adamant. I told him you were coming to luncheon and he 's coming over to see you. I hope you can use your influence with him to better purpose than I."

"I 'm not sure I have any. And if I have, I 'm not sure I 'd like to use it in the way you want me to."

"But see here, Helen: there 's common-sense in all things. I 'll tell you now, confidentially—I have it straight from the War Department and you must n't breathe it or you 'll get me into trouble—early in April there will be officers' training-camps established all over the country, and there 's where Ted ought to be. It 's a sinful waste of fine material to have him where he is."

"Established before war 's declared?" asked Helen.

"I don't know whether war will be declared by then or not, but the camps will be established, anyway. I want you to tell Ted that, confidentially, and tell him I

will get him out of this and give him a chance to volunteer for an officer. I, being in the position of his superior officer, could n't betray the secrets of the War Department to him, but I empower you to. I can trust him absolutely not to betray me, and anyway it won't be a secret long—the announcement will be made in a week or two, probably. But every day he stays down here will make it harder to get him off. Of course," added the colonel, hesitating, "if worse comes to worst, I could . . . I suppose . . ." and there he stopped.

"Well?" said Helen.

"I suppose I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb," said the colonel, smiling grimly as he made a quick decision. "Here goes another state secret. If you ever betray me, Helen, I 'm a ruined man. See what it is to have a reputation for discretion; you can worm every secret out of me."

"I 'm not conscious of any 'worming,' " said Helen demurely.

"I 've received orders," continued the colonel, ignoring her little sarcasm and lowering his voice unconsciously, while he drew his chair a little nearer Helen's, "to select a certain number of men to be put in training at once for commissions. We 're going to need a great many more officers than West Point can furnish us, and our first supply will have to come from the regular army. Of course I ought to make my selection from my old men, top sergeants preferably, but I suppose I could strain a point and send Ted for one."

"Would n't the men have a right to complain?"

"Yes, I suppose they would," admitted the colonel, dubiously.

"Oh, I don't think it would do! I 'm sure Ted would n't like it."

The colonel glanced out at the window and started nervously. "Bless my soul! here comes the lad! It is n't a quarter to three, is it?"

"To the minute," said Helen, glancing at her wrist.

"You 'll do your best? Promise me, Helen," the colonel demanded anxiously and hurriedly; for Helen had not as yet indicated whether she thought it the right thing to do or not, and the maid was already answering Ted's ring.

"Yes, I promise," she said slowly. "I 'll do my best."

"Thank you," murmured the colonel, hastily, and called aloud, "Come in, my boy!" as Ted stood on the threshold at salute.

Ted lowered his hand and glanced at Helen. If his heart gave a quicker beat at sight of her, looking so fresh and dainty in her trim street suit, he did not show it.

"I 'm not quite up on army regulations, Colonel. Is it permitted a private to shake hands with a lady?"

"I 'm up on them," Helen intercepted the colonel's answer. "He 'd be court-martialed if he did n't; would n't he, Colonel Barton?"

"He would if you 're the lady," chuckled the colonel, who loved this sparring for time, and who was perfectly sure the two young people were merely "camouflaging," as he called it. He would make an excuse to get away and relieve their embarrassment.

The excuse was made for him by the entrance of an orderly with mail, and the colonel retired in good order to his den to open it.

"Helen," said Ted quickly, almost before the door had closed on Colonel Barton, "it was awfully good of you to come way down here to see a poor private!"

"What makes you think I came to see you?" smiling wickedly. "Colonel Barton invited me to luncheon."

She expected him to be embarrassed, but he was n't, a bit. And she thought she had never seen him look half as handsome. His fresh khaki uniform was wonderfully becoming; he was quite impressive, his six feet and broad shoulders so well set up, and his whole bearing erect, alert, military. Could three days a soldier do all that? Then she decided it was not the khaki and not the way he carried himself, but the happy light in his eyes that showed a secret satisfaction with himself, and that she had not often seen there. He felt that he was doing the right thing. Should she deliberately set to work to undo it all? She had given her promise to Colonel Barton, but she could wish she might recall it.

Of course her thought was only a lightning flash, and Ted was already answering her, at ease and unembarrassed:

"Oh, of course! But the colonel told me why he invited you. Begin. I don't believe even you can unsettle my conviction that I 've done the right thing."

"Oh, Ted, I don't want to begin! I don't know why I promised Colonel Barton; only he seemed so sure you had made a mistake."

"Do you think so, Helen?"

"I did n't think so. I thought it was the finest thing you had ever done, and I was proud of you, Ted."

"But now?" persisted Ted.

"I 'm just as proud of you," Helen answered slowly,

"and I am glad you did it. But now I almost believe I would take Colonel Barton's advice and let him get you out of it."

"Not enlist!"

Ted's tones expressed every shade of dismay, disgust, and disappointment. That Helen should disapprove of him!—the one person he had been so sure of pleasing.

"Colonel Barton told me to tell you—but it 's a state secret and you must not betray him; he said he could trust you absolutely—that in April there will be officers' training-camps established and he wants you to get out of the regular army and enter one of them."

"Do you think it 's any more patriotic to be an officer than a private?"

"Certainly not more patriotic. But he says you 're too fine material to be wasted as a private in the regular army."

"Why does he slur the regular army?"

"He does n't. But he says, what is perfectly true, that privates in the regular army in times of peace are men who go into it as a trade, not from any particularly patriotic motive, while volunteers in war times are more of your own class. He 's in earnest in wanting to get you out of it."

"The colonel 's a good old boy," began Ted and broke off abruptly: "Why, hello, here 's Janie!" He was going forward to greet her in his usual debonair fashion when something in her manner struck him as peculiar and he brought himself up short at salute.

"What 's the etiquette with the colonel's daughter, Miss Barton? I don't know."

Janie had for a moment felt that she could hardly

treat a private as a social equal and her manner had betrayed her. Now she was ashamed of herself.

"Oh, Ted, I 'm so mad at you!" she said, shaking hands with him cordially. "Helen, I hate to break into this conference, but I 'm late; we 'll have to hurry. Can't you ride into town with us, Ted?"

"Is it permitted, with the colonel's daughter?"

"Oh, of course it is!" a little peeved that he should persist in his rebuke when she had repented.

"Well, then, I will. I have leave to go in town this afternoon on business. I was going in by trolley, but if you and Helen are going to motor in I 'll be glad of the chance to go with you."

He was disappointed, for he had looked forward to that trolley ride with Helen; but he made himself so impartially delightful to the two girls that Janie, at least, did not dream he was disappointed. Perhaps Helen did, for she was a little disappointed herself when she heard that Ted had been intending to go in town by trolley, and realized that if it had not been for her promise to go in with Janie she might have had that long ride with him and found a chance to finish pleading her case.

At Sunshine House Ted—who of course had alighted from the car to help Helen out—did not get in again.

"But I thought you were going up-town with me," pouted Janie.

"Not on your life! It does n't matter down in this part of town, but there would be a scandal in high life if a private were seen riding with his colonel's daughter up-town."

"Not if the private was the elegant Mr. Ted Jarvis," said Janie, coquettishly.

"It would never do," he reiterated with a whimsical shake of his head that also expressed finality, and Janie had to drive on without him.

"Helen," he said, turning quickly toward her from his final salute to Janie, "I had a telephone from Grant just before I went over to Colonel Barton's. I had barely time, after getting it, to find the officer of the day and get a permit to come in town and then rush over to see you and tell you about it; and I haven't had a chance to tell you a word."

"What was it about?" asked Helen with something of his contagious excitement.

"Come, get on the street-car with me and ride up as far as Grant's office. There are always so many people around in Sunshine House, I can never get a word alone with you."

"I can't," said Helen, regretfully. "I promised Miss Roberts I would be back by four to relieve her, and I left word for a woman who has been behaving badly to come and see me at that hour."

"Oh, Helen! Are you never able to live your own life!" Ted exclaimed impatiently. "It 's worse than being a private in the regular army."

Helen ignored this. They were standing at the door of Sunshine House, where they had stood when Ted had kissed her hand. They had not stood there together since, and the memory brought a quick flush to the cheeks of both as their eyes met in silent recall of it.

"Tell me what he said, Ted; I must know," Helen broke the silence she could not bear calmly.

"They 've caught Bruenig!"

"Caught him! Oh, I 'm so glad! Will you get your money back?"

"I don't know about that; I 'm going up to see Grant about it now. He, too, wants me to get out of the army for a while—get a leave of absence, at least. He wants me to go on to Washington with him; Bruenig's held there as a Federal prisoner on the accusation of espionage, I think."

"But won't you get any of your money back?"

"Grant thinks I shall. He says Bruenig was loaded down with valuable securities—some of them his own, probably, and some of them mine converted, possibly. Grant doesn't see how Bernstorff ever let him keep so many."

"He didn't know he had them, probably. But how did they catch him?"

"It was quite clever of the detectives. A perfectly charming old lady secured passage on a boat sailing for Spain. That was the line the detectives were watching most carefully. There was nothing especially suspicious about her, except that it was a little unusual for an old lady to be going to any place in Europe alone, in these times. But they couldn't nail anything, and two of the detectives took passage, intending to return with the pilot from Sandy Hook. They got the number of her cabin from the steamer's records and they watched until the charming old lady went down to lunch, where she had a seat at the captain's table. Then they entered her cabin with a pass-key and broke open her trunk, and the cat was out of the bag. They sent for the captain and showed him their authority, and the captain sent for his charming old lady table-guest. Bruenig was compelled

to get rid of his disguises and put on his own clothes—there were plenty of them in his trunk—and he and his trunk went back with the detectives to New York on the pilot-boat."

"It sounds exactly like a dime-novel or a Sherlock Holmes story."

"It is!"

"But you will get your money back?"

"I don't know how much—some, I suppose. But between big rewards to the clever detectives and big lawyer's fees, I 'm afraid there won't be much left for me."

"What are you going to do? Are you going to Washington?"

"I 'll probably have to. No doubt the Government will send for me; and of course then they 'll give me leave of absence at the Barracks.

"And perhaps I 'll not go back, Helen. Between you and Colonel Barton I 'm pretty nearly convinced that I ought to try for the officers' training-camp. And if the Washington people send for me, that will be my excuse; for I have enough false pride to be ashamed of not sticking to my job unless I have a mighty good excuse for getting out of it."

"I 'll be almost sorry," said Helen regretfully. "I was so proud of Private Theodore Jarvis!"

Whereupon Ted, regardless of broad daylight, did exactly as he had done on the Sunday night he brought her home from Cornelia's tea-party.

CHAPTER XI

REDDY RETURNS

NOT until after the declaration of war did Helen see Ted again. He had been sent to Washington, as he had thought would be the case, and he had made the Washington visit his excuse for securing the release from the regular army that Colonel Barton had urged.

He left for home the evening of April second after listening to the President's address to Congress, but he did not call up Helen until the morning of the seventh.

"I 'm coming down to see you this afternoon, Helen. Will you go for a drive?" he asked.

"On the street-cars?"

"I bought back my old roadster yesterday—at a big advance, of course—and I 'm in my old rooms at the St. Francis."

Now Helen knew that he had given up his rooms at the club before he enlisted and sold his car at the same time because he felt he could afford to keep neither. It must be, then, that he had recovered his money, at least in part.

"Then you did get your money?" she asked.

"I 'm going to get part of it, anyway. It will take time, but I concluded I might as well be comfortable for the next week or two. By that time I 'll be off to camp, I hope."

On the long drive through the city streets to reach the

county he told her of the trial; and she was intensely interested,

"I could almost have felt sorry for Bruenig," he said. "He used to be a decent fellow. Father thought him the most upright, thoroughly incorruptible man he knew. I can't but think he believed he was doing the absolutely right thing to use an alien enemy's money for the Fatherland. No doubt Bernstorff helped him to that conviction. The man sat with his head bowed in his hands—I could n't catch his eye once. Verily, verily, Helen, the way of the transgressor is hard!"

"What have they done with him?"

"Sent him to the penitentiary for twenty-five years. Of course he will never come out of it alive."

"But he has a wife and a daughter; has n't he? What will become of them? Will there be any money left for them?"

"Not a cent. It 's all coming to me and won't half replace what he has taken. The German Government ought to take care of his family; but if it does n't, I 'll see that they have enough to keep them comfortably. I told Grant to look out for that. And, by the way, there 's one good thing that has come out of all this."

"What is it?"

"I 'm my own master, have charge of my money. The Court ordered it. The old judge said since my trustee had made such a mess of my affairs, he would let me manage them for myself. He did n't believe I could make any worse mess of them."

Driving west into a county that was one immense bouquet of blossoming fruit-trees and lilacs and flowering shrubs, Ted said:

"I had the time of my life in Washington, Helen. Every other place, even New York, seems dull and quiet by comparison. There 's something tremendously exciting happening there every minute. All the big men of the country are either there or on their way, and it 's almost impossible to get a place in a sleeper going to Washington or in a hotel after you get there."

"Did you hear the President's speech? I would have given anything to hear it."

"Indeed I did! I thought of you. I knew how tremendously you would have enjoyed it and I would have gladly given up my place if you could only have taken it. Since you could n't, I 'm glad I had it. Helen, it was one of the great epochs in the history of the world." Ted spoke with a note of solemnity in his voice that thrilled Helen. "Just the house itself was an inspiration—all the Justices of the Supreme Court up in front and the full Diplomatic Corps in evening dress, and the Senators marching in, every man with a flag, and the galleries packed to suffocation. Then the Speaker announced, 'The President of the United States!'

"I never before realized what a wonderful thing it is to be President of the United States. Why, the office alone makes the man who holds it the foremost man of the world! I was thrilled to the bone by the mere announcement. And to see those venerable old judges, and the dignified diplomats, Senators, Congressmen, and the mob in the galleries, all spring to their feet, waving frantically and shouting themselves hoarse for fully two minutes before they let him begin! And when I thought of the whole world, Ally, Enemy and Neutral, waiting

and listening for those words that quiet man was so quietly reading from the desk in front of the Speaker, I could hardly breathe for excitement. And when he came to the wonderful part of his speech, I believe the whole house literally held its breath until he finished; and then it broke out into such wild shouting and *yelling,* this time, every one on his feet, flags waving, the ovation at his entrance was nothing by comparison. There was no mistaking how that house felt about war. I don't believe I shall ever know such a tremendous moment again as long as I live. It is worth losing half my fortune to have been on the spot to hear it.

"You started me on the right way of thinking about this war, Helen," Ted went on, "and the President has finished it. I could n't wait to get home to enlist. To set the world free! Never again to let one man, or a clique of men, deliberately set out to take a people's country from them and drench the world in blood to gratify their own ambitions! And to free the Germans, so that they can never again be fooled or driven into such a war, such a slaughter-house, where they lay down their lives by the million to gratify a ruler's lust for power! I 've enlisted. I 'll go to the officers' training-camp by the middle of the month, I hope, but I can't wait to get to France. I want to be fighting for it. I want to *help* to set the world free, to make it safe!"

Ted was carried away by the glow of his enthusiasm. He was on fire and he set Helen's emotions ablaze.

"Oh, Ted," she said in a low voice, vibrant with feeling—half generous pride in Ted's ardor, half mournful regret that she was not in his place—"what a wonderful thing it is to be a young man!"

Up to this hour she had unconsciously felt herself superior to Ted. She had looked down upon him, not scornfully perhaps but only half tolerantly, as a man without purpose in life and without ambition—a creature of impulse, which to Helen spelled weakling. She would never look down on him again. She looked up at him, now, with her face all aglow with pride in him.

He answered her look and the undercurrent of her words by a quiet, "Thank you, Helen," and they drove on for a long time in silence. Ted was fighting a strong impulse to plead his case with Helen once more. He believed she was in a mood to listen to him; he believed that at last he would win. But two cogent reasons held him silent. The less creditable of the two was a new kind of pride. He would come back and claim her when he had won his spurs and could speak as one having a right to his own, and not as a feeble petitioner for her bounty. The second one was consideration for her. What if he should win her love now only to leave her forlorn, a prey to horrible anxieties, and quite possibly at last a broken-hearted mourner for the dead? No, he would wait.

Through all this long conflict with himself he had been driving steadily and skilfully up hill and down, his eyes fixed straight ahead and his face set in stern lines. Had Helen known what tremendous self-restraint he was exercising, she might have wondered that she could ever have thought this man a weakling who would now seem to her the very apotheosis of strength and power.

What made Helen silent Ted did not know. He did not even notice that she was not talking, so absorbed was he in his own struggle. As for Helen, she sat beside Ted, furtively glancing at him from time to time, con-

scious that some strong feeling was stirring him, half guessing at its nature, and thrilling at her guess. Though even yet she was not sure what her answer would be, should he turn to her, as at any moment she half expected he would, and ask her that question he had asked so often in vain.

But when the silence had lasted a full twenty minutes, and she was beginning to feel herself in a panic, and that she must break it at any hazard, she saw his face gradually clear as if some great determination had been taken and he turned to her with a wonderful light in his eyes. She was sure the hour had struck, and her nerves were on such stretched tension that it was almost like a blow in the face when he asked casually:

"Shall we stop at the Country Club for tea?"

In the days and weeks and months that followed—some of them made dreadful by dreary waiting, some of them crowded with soul-absorbing experiences—Helen was to remember that ride with a mingling of melancholy and delight.

The spring afternoon had been wonderfully beautiful. The world in its fresh young green; bluebirds and meadow-larks, cardinals and orioles, singing madly with a bird's exquisite delight in living and loving; the spring-like odor of upturned sod; the sweet smell of growing things; the fragrance of fruit-blossoms and lilacs; the fresh young leafage of April crowning every hill and outlining every full rushing stream with tender greens and pinks and yellows and silvers, made it a ride to be exquisitely remembered. Yet when Ted left her at the door of Sunshine House with a quiet, "I will see you again before I go, Helen," she was conscious of a feel-

ing of unsatisfaction, of unfulfilment; and the memory of that afternoon was always tinged with a gentle melancholy.

It was almost dinner time when she reached Sunshine House, and after dinner she was plunged at once into the usual absorbing activities of the evening. Boys' clubs and girls' clubs were to be looked after, and her part to be taken as hostess of the Neighborhood Parlor. She had no time to indulge in melancholy, no time to dwell on either the happiness or the sadness of the beautiful afternoon; and she was glad to have it so.

It was after ten o'clock. The other residents had gone up-stairs; she was alone in the office for a few minutes, and free to indulge in a retrospect of the day. She was so lost in her musings, half melancholy, half happy, that she almost sprang out of her chair when she heard a light tap on the window-pane. She was terribly startled, for a moment, as she caught sight of a pale face with haggard eyes, looking at her through the glass. Was this a bold housebreaker whose advent, since she would live in such a neighborhood, her friends had long predicted? For one moment she was terrified.

Then something in the eyes drew her. Could that be Reddy's wraith looking out of those blue eyes that she remembered as always dancing and sparkling with glee? Was Reddy dead and was that his lost soul looking at her so piteously? For only a lost soul could have the yearning sadness of those eyes. Impulsively she ran to the door, opened it and called softly:

"Reddy!"

He stepped out of the shadows where he was lurking and sank at her feet.

"Miss Seymour! Miss Seymour!" he managed to utter, with his hands stretched up to her.

She took his hands and spoke to him, in the softest, kindest voice but with the firmness of authority:

"Get up, Reddy. Come into my office. I want to see you."

He scrambled to his feet and shambled in after her—a forlorn, haggard Reddy, that not even Sergeant Casey could have recognized either as the daredevil Chief of the De Bolivar Street Gang, or the gay, happy, gallant President of the Young Citizens' Club.

It was April and furnace fires were out; but the coals were still glowing in the grate, for April nights are cool. Reddy's hands were like ice. Helen drew up a chair for him by the fire and almost pushed him into it, seeing now more clearly in the brightly lighted office the hollow cheeks and lusterless eyes, the worn and soiled clothes, the unkempt hair, and the pitiful attempts at clean face and hands.

She had not heard from Reddy since his letter enclosing the dollar. His family had not heard from him, either, and Helen had grieved greatly for fear some accident had befallen him or that he had gone wrong morally. Now, as she looked at him, she believed that he had had no money even to buy postage stamps, and that he had been starving. Her heart was broken with pity for him.

She moved softly to the windows and lowered the shades, then she drew up a chair beside him and took his hand.

"Tell me, Reddy, are you hungry?" she asked.

There never was a sweeter voice in the world, Reddy

thought. "When I git to heaven the blessed angels won't sound no swater," he said to himself. He was gazing at her with all his soul in his eyes, into which the slow tears were welling, and he forgot to answer. She had to ask him again.

"P'raps I am, Miss," he said shamefacedly. "I ain't had much to eat lately."

"Then sit still by the fire until I get you something," she commanded, and was gone.

She was back in an incredibly short time with a tray, and Reddy could see at a glance that the tray held a plate and cup and saucer, a pile of bread slices, a generous pat of butter, a tea-caddy, *cheese,* a queer shiny thing, and a saucepan.

"Now we are going to have a party, and you must have patience until it 's ready," she said gaily, and with wonderfully swift movements she had the saucepan, with just enough water in it to boil quickly, on the glowing coals, the shiny thing fastened to an electric bracket, and four slices of bread laid in it, a little stand drawn up by Reddy's chair with a pretty tea-cloth on it, and on the tea-cloth plate and cup, sugar-bowl and cream-pitcher, butter, and a great triangle of luscious yellow cheese!

Reddy's eyes glistened and grew big at all these preparations, though it made him dreadfully ashamed to have Miss Seymour doing so much for him. But in a minute the water in the saucepan was boiling and poured over the fragrant tea-leaves in the tea-pot standing hot on the hearth, and then the steaming brew was poured into his cup, rich cream and lumps of white sugar were added, and the cup was set before him.

"Now drink, sir," Miss Seymour commanded, "while I butter your toast."

And with shame in his heart, and idolatry in his soul, and adoration in his eyes, Reddy ate the great pile of delicious hot buttered toast, brown and crisp and delicate, and drank cup after cup of the fragrant tea Miss Seymour poured for him, and devoured every crumb of the luscious cheese. And starved and greedy as he was, he did it all like a gentleman, Miss Seymour noted, and handled his napkin quite as if he were used to it.

Then, as his hunger was appeased, Helen drew him on to tell her his pitiful tale—as much as he would, which was not much.

"I never could git work, seems loike," was almost all he would say. "An' when I heard there wuz goin' to be war, I jes' made up me moind I 'd come home and jine. But I had to walk most o' the way, the cops wuz allays hangin' round the trains, an' 't was fur in the North I wuz, an' it took me so long, an' I hated to beg, so most times I jes' did n't eat. An' I thought ef I only got home to me mother, she 'd give me a good square meal. An' thin, at last, whin I got to the city, I was awful tired, but I got ez fur ez our yard an' went up to the rooms, an' there wuz somebuddy else livin' in 'em. An' thin I come to you. An' where *is* me mother, Miss Seymour?"

Reddy's eyes filled this time to overflowing as he uttered his heartbroken wail, and he who loved to flourish a white and dainty handkerchief drew a dingy pretense of one from his pocket and tried to wipe his tears furtively.

"Oh, Reddy, Reddy! What sorrows you 've had!" Helen cried in a real agony of sympathy for him. "And

to think we should have added to them! Your mother is well and happy—just as happy, that is, as she can be without her boy. We never knew where to write you and so we could n't tell you of all that has happened to your father. When you went away he arranged to pay Mr. Carleton ten dollars a week toward the damages to the automobile—''

''Tin dollars!'' Reddy groaned. ''Good God!'' It would hardly have seemed worse to him if it had been ten thousand. And to think he had brought *that* on his father! ''Oh, Miss Seymour, I 'm a baste!'' he groaned again, and buried his face in his hands.

''But listen, Reddy, it 's all right now!'' she hastened to reassure him. ''It was hard for a while, and your father would n't let me help him. But after he had paid ten dollars promptly to the hour for five weeks, Mr. Carleton sent for him. He was so much pleased with your father's faithfulness that he forgave him the rest of the debt and gave him a good position in his office as his secretary. Your father is getting three times as much money as he ever earned before, and he is doing the work he likes and is fitted for.''

''Me father!'' Reddy ejaculated, too overcome at such astounding news to say anything else. And then after a moment: ''But where is he? An' me mother? An' me sister?''

''They have a little cottage at Valley Groves. Your mother and Juliette and I went out one day and spent the day looking for it. It 's the kind of home you will love, Reddy. Juliette loves it and is growing so well and strong and pretty! And your mother loves it; only she is always mourning for her boy.''

"Where is it, Miss Seymour? I 'll go there this minute an' foind me mother." Reddy sprang to his feet, ready to start at once.

But Helen would not let him. It was too late for a trip to the country. He could never find it by himself; she would have to go with him. He should go down with her to the supply store and select a complete new outfit, as he had done once before, and, also as he had done before, he should get a good tubbing and spend the night in their pretty little guest-room fitted up for just such guests.

Sleep at Sunshine House! Reddy would not hear of it. It sounded like profanation to him. But Helen knew how to prevail with him, and when she had gone with him to the supply store and helped him outfit himself, she went back to the office and sat down in her comfortable chair before the fire and waited for him, thinking of all he must have been through and would not speak of; thinking of how wonderful it would seem to him, who had not slept in a bed since he left home, she was sure, to lie between clean and fragrant sheets on a comfortable mattress and springs, in a pretty room; and thinking of the joy that was lying in wait for the Paschal family on the morrow, when the prodigal should return.

It was not more than half an hour when Reddy appeared at the office door, and but for the hollow cheeks and the shrunken figure and stooping shoulders, once so trim and erect, and the haggard eyes that used to be always dancing with glee, she might have thought him the Reddy of old. He was immaculately clean, his hair was glossy, and his face shone with a great happiness.

He had something of his old debonair manner, too, as he stood at the door and made his courtly bow.

"I 'll not come in, Miss Seymour," he said. "It 's late, an' I don't want to be kapin' yeh. An' ef ye 'll be so good ez to tell me where 's me room, I 'll bid ye good-noight."

Helen went with him as far as his room and turned on his light by the switch at the door. He would not let her enter.

"It 's not nissary," he said, gravely and courteously. "Good-noight, Miss Seymour, and may God and His angels bless yeh."

Just as Helen was turning away he added, with lips that he struggled hard to keep from quivering, "I 'll find me mother in the mornin'."

CHAPTER XII

REDDY RECRUITING

IT was the night for the meeting of the Young Citizens' Club at Sunshine House. Reddy had spent two nights with his mother in Valley Groves, and a wonderfully happy reunion it had proved to be; and now he was to come in town and join his company in the National Guards. This one evening was left to him to do as he pleased with and he came in town to spend it with the old Gang.

They had heard rumors of Reddy's return and the room was full when he entered. He was still pale and hollow-eyed and hollow-cheeked, but something of the old light had returned to his eyes and the old spring to his step in those two days he had spent at home. It was such a home as he had sometimes dreamed of but never really hoped to know—a pretty cottage, neat as a pin from attic to cellar; a pretty garden with close-shaven lawn and spring flowers all abloom; a little sister rosy and bright-eyed going to school with little classmates who adored and made a pet of the beautiful child; a father who had recovered something of the carriage and the manner of a gentleman and had dropped forever the shameful veneer of it; and a mother, a dear adoring mother, who had lost none of her warm-hearted Irish affections, but was fast losing much of the brogue and the noisy manifestations of emotion that might lower her

in the esteem of her more phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon neighbors.

It was a happy Reddy who had spent a half-hour with Miss Seymour in the cozy office before time for the meeting of the club.

"I 'm thinkin', Miss Seymour, p'raps the army 's the best place to make a man o' meself, after all. I can't go wrong an' I 'll try mighty hard to go right."

"It ought to be, Reddy. It 's such a grand thing to be fighting in such a cause! And I 'm expecting great things of you, Reddy. You 'll be first-class private before long and then corporal and sergeant and—who knows?—you may be lieutenant some day," said Helen, glowingly.

"It 's not loikely," responded Reddy, soberly, and trying his best to hide the glow of delight Helen's words had inspired. "You 're not to be expectin' too much o' me, Miss Seymour; I 'm only a poor Irish lad without no education. But I 'll do me best."

It was Reddy's old phrase and Helen always liked the way he squared his shoulders when he used it, and the light of determination that flashed from his eyes.

She would have liked to be present at the meeting of the Young Citizens' Club with its former president; but Reddy did not urge it and she knew he would feel freer, less embarrassed, in what might prove to be an embarrassing crisis, if she were not present.

But if Reddy had expected to find it embarrassing to return as a fugitive from justice to the place where he had posed somewhat as mentor and exemplar of right-doing, he had misjudged the old De Bolivar Street Gang. They might have traveled far on the road to civic right-

eousness since the Gang had been metamorphosed into the Young Citizens' Club, but it was still no disgrace in their eyes to have run off an "auto" in the way of joy-riding, and still something of an achievement to have got the best of the "cops."

Helen, from a club-room a door or two away, heard the shouts of delight that greeted Reddy's entrance and was almost as much relieved at the sounds thereof as Reddy himself must have been. When, a few minutes later, the riotous noises subsided, and only one clear young voice she knew well rang out, she would have given much to hear the speech she knew Reddy was making. Had she heard it she might have been amused, but she would have been thrilled, too, for there was no doubt the young orator was in deadly earnest.

"Feller citizens!" Reddy began. "I am most happy to be with youse onst more. I ain't yer president no longer, feller citizens." (Shouts of "yes, yeh air," interrupted the speaker.) "No, I ain't yer president; me hon'rable friend, Mr. James O'Hara, fills me place." ("No, no!" shouted Jim.) "He fills me place better 'n iver I filled it." ("Yeh 'll allays be de chief," from a half-dozen voices.) "No, me feller citizens, I 'll niver be yer chief agin," the orator went on. "'Cause why? I 've jined the army and to-morrow I goes to camp!"

"Ah, watcher do that fur!" "Don't be afther leavin' us, Reddy, wen you's jes' got home!" "I would n't fight fur no Britisher!" This last speech roused Reddy's righteous wrath.

"Now, see here, you fellers," he shouted and his blue eyes shot flames of fire, "I want none o' that! Fight fur the British! Wat ef I wuz fightin' fur the British?

Ain't they laid down their lives fur the Beljums, like the good sports they is? Ain't they fightin' to make the world safe fur Democracy, like wat the President said? Ain't they fightin' to save the world from the bloody Prooshun an' Kaiser Bill wats tryin' to conquer the hull world an' make 'em slaves? Ain't that wat their 'Deutchland, Deutchland over all' means? Yes, an' it means over us, too, us *Amuricans,* I tells yeh! I 'm an Irishman, an' there 's been times when I did n't like the British an' their ways, but they 's showed themselves such game sports, fightin' wen they did n't have to, I tells yeh right here an' now I 'd fight fur the British anny day, ef I had to! But 't ain't fur the British I 'm goin' to fight, it 's fur Amuricer. An' it 's more than fur Amuricer, it 's fur the whole world, Miss Seymour says, to set it free. *Free!* I tells yeh, so no bloomin' Kaiser can't niver agin start a war like this un. An' I tells ye right here an' now, fellers, I 'm an Irishman, all right, an' I glory in the name, but I could n't hold up my head ef I let all thim Britishers do my fightin' fur me, and save me from bein' made a slave by them bloody Huns. An' wats more, I tells ye here an' now, that anny Irishman who won't fight fur his country—that 's Amuricer—an' won't fight fur the world—Miss Seymour calls it 'humanity'—an' won't fight fur God an' the Right, ain't no friend o' mine! An' I wants to know, here and now, how many o' youse 'll jine.''

There had been awed silence through Reddy's ringing speech, but such an uproar as broke out when he finished sent Helen flying to Number Two to save Reddy's life, she feared. What she saw astounded her. All the boys

in the room were crowding around Reddy and each boy was shouting his own name at the top of his lungs, mingled with cries of "Take my name fust, Reddy," "I wants to be in yer company, Reddy," "Will ye take us to the recrootin' offices the marnin', Reddy?"

Reddy was happy. One swift glance of mingled pride and embarrassment he shot from his blue eyes toward Helen as she entered, and then he ignored her, steadily taking down names and addresses as fast as his nimble pencil could write them.

The rendezvous of the new recruits was appointed for an early hour the next morning at Sunshine House, and it was a proud Reddy that marshaled his line down the street past the gaping crowd of all the small boys of the neighborhood and before the admiring glances of Sergeant Casey himself, who saluted Reddy gravely: "Marnin,' Cap'n!"

CHAPTER XIII

REDDY? PETER? PIERRE?

AND that was the last Helen saw of Reddy for many a long day.

At a temporary camp in the county he was being drilled and molded into shape as a United States soldier. The camp was only twenty miles away, but she missed him on both visits she paid to it and he missed her on the one visit he paid to Sunshine House. But when the time was at hand for entrainment to one of the great cantonments, Reddy felt he could not go without seeing Miss Seymour. He called her over the telephone to be sure of not missing her this time.

"Hello, Reddy, is that you? I did n't recognize your voice," she answered, in reply to his call. But what she did not recognize was his speech. His voice had the same rich Irish inflections, but his speech was marvelously like the speech of a gentleman.

When he told her he was to entrain for Fort Barry in the morning, she invited him to dinner at Sunshine House that evening and, somewhat to her surprise, he accepted.

"And come early, Reddy," she added to her invitation, "and we can have a nice talk before dinner."

Reddy knew that evening at Sunshine House was the busy part of the day, and long before the early dinner hour he presented himself at the office and asked for Miss Seymour.

"You 're to go up-stairs to the living-room," said Miss Roberts, after the first friendly greetings. "It 's the first door at the head of the landing, you can't miss it. Miss Seymour will be in presently; she was called across to the Clinic for a moment."

Reddy had never been up-stairs in the Residence House before. The lower floor was given up to Neighborhood Parlor, Library, Office, and guest-room, but up-stairs was sacred to the resident workers. It was with a feeling akin to awe, therefore, that he mounted the stairs and entered the living-room, cozy with comfortable chairs and couches and books and magazines and pictures, and a little tea-table, shining with silver and china, drawn up by a bright fire in the grate.

Reddy had never been in a room like it before. His mother's little parlor at Valley Groves he had thought very grand, and the Neighborhood Parlor down-stairs was a big, comfortable room, but there was an air about this room, though Reddy did not so characterize it, different from any other he had ever known.

There was no one in the room and a picture on the wall drew his fascinated scrutiny. Reddy did not know that it was a wonderful print of a wonderful masterpiece, but the boy must have been born with the artistic sense, for he was so lost in absorbed contemplation that he did not hear Helen's light step as she entered the room, and did not turn around until she had spoken his name.

It was rather a hesitating "Reddy" she uttered, for she could hardly believe that broad-shouldered, good-looking back could belong to the forlorn Reddy with the narrow and drooping shoulders she had last seen.

At the sound of her voice he turned, his face aglow

with delight at the meeting, and moved quickly forward with outstretched hand and an assured grace, Helen said to herself, that Ted himself could not have surpassed. But in the very moment of greeting her overwhelming embarrassment seized him and he was once more the Irish lad of the settlement as, fiery red and actually trembling, he barely touched Helen's hand. But Helen would have none of that. She held his hand in a firm and friendly grasp and looked up at him admiringly.

"I 'm so glad to see you at last, Reddy!" she said with frank cordiality. "And how you have grown! You must be at least six inches taller."

Reddy laughed delightedly.

"Not quite, Miss Seymour, but I 've grown some. And, Miss Seymour, it 's the life, all right! There 's nothing like it!"

What had he done to his speech? She was glad he had not lost entirely his delicious Irish brogue, but he no longer murdered the King's English, and how could such a miracle have been accomplished in so short a time? And how good-looking he was! She did not believe there was a better-looking man in her circle of friends unless, perhaps, Ted Jarvis.

"Sit down and tell me all about it, Reddy," she said quickly. "I have wanted so much to know what you were doing out there and I've been so sorry to miss you."

Reddy sat down, a little awkwardly, on the edge of his chair. He was more at home on his feet, with Miss Seymour looking up at him.

"What! a corporal already?" as she glanced at the stripes on his sleeve.

Reddy blushed.

"Yes," he said, and could not quite conceal his pride.

And then, skilfully, Helen drew him on to tell of his life in camp. Little by little Reddy forgot his gaucherie. He slipped back into his chair and leaned forward, his elbows resting on his knees and his glowing eyes devouring Helen, as he told her every detail of camp life. From reveille and the setting-up exercises in the morning, followed by the quick plunge in Crève Cœur Lake and breakfast, he went through the schedule of the day minutely till bedtime and taps. He even told her what they had to eat and described in his racy Irish fashion the horse-play of the boys, and caricatured neatly and deftly some of the peculiarities of his officers. Led on by the genuine interest in Helen's eyes and by an occasional skilful question, he suddenly brought himself up short.

"I 'm sure boring you, Miss Seymour! Why did you let me run on so? I came to hear about you and Sunshine House, not to be talking of meself," he said, thoroughly abashed and yet with a certain poise that bewildered Helen. Where had he learned it? While he had been telling her of life in camp he had been the old Reddy with the ready tongue and the Irish wit, sometimes a little rough but always keen. But this Reddy was different. There was something of the old-school French courtliness of his father at his best, and Helen thought camp life, as she had visioned it, could hardly have that effect. First she answered him and then she asked a question of her own:

"You know I 'm not bored, Reddy! I 'm intensely interested. I could listen for hours to your stories. It 's a wonderful life."

"Yes, it 's the life!" Reddy interjected glowingly.

"But tell me, Reddy, do they teach you English in camp? You have improved in your speech so wonderfully; I could hardly believe I was listening to you over the telephone."

Reddy blushed a deep red under his freckles, partly from embarrassment, partly from delight—delight, since any commendation from Miss Seymour would always give him exquisite pleasure; embarrassment because, although to Helen he would always be the Irish boy in whom she was deeply interested and whom she was always trying to assist in his upward progress, to himself he seemed to have passed beyond that stage. He was already beginning to feel himself, not yet on her heights, but on a level which no longer admitted of the relation of pupil and tutor. Helen was quick to interpret the embarrassment and, knowing Reddy's sensitive Irish temperament, she made a swift resolve to be careful not to wound that new-born self-esteem that was his best guarantee of success.

But whether it was vanity, conceit, or self-esteem that had received the prick from Helen's innocently expressed admiration, Reddy was too much of a gentleman not to express his appreciation of it.

"Thank you, Miss Seymour," he said, stammering a little over his speech, "there was room for improvement. You and Dad are responsible. Dad never bothered about the way I talked until he saw I was determined to make a man of meself; then he set to work on me. He told me to listen to the officers when they talked and to talk as much like them as I could. And he said there would be

some of the men who would know how to talk, and to copy them. And there were, Miss Seymour, some of the boys like . . . like . . . that friend of yours who you said was just like a brother. And I made a friend of one of them and he helps me a lot.''

Helen was amazed at the steadfast ambition in a boy like Reddy, planning how best to achieve his end and achieving it.

''And that is n't all, Miss Seymour. Dad told me I could learn more by reading good stories, novels—society novels, he called them—and noticing how the people in them talked, than in any other way. And me friend, Hal Clarkson, told me what books to get out of the camp library. Have you ever read Thackeray's books, Miss Seymour, and Trollope's and George Meredith's?'' Reddy asked timidly.

Amazed and amused, Helen answered with no trace of either emotion: ''Yes, and love them all. Don't you, Reddy?''

''Some of them are fine. But I did n't care much for Meredith's stories, except 'Richard Feverell'; he was great.''

''How about Trollope?''

''Oh, I liked the Warden and Dr. Thorne; and his niece and the man she married—I 've forgotten his name. Yes, and that rich patent-medicine woman that married Dr. Thorne, I liked her. And I liked the hunts fine. I 'd like to be an English country gentleman and own a stable full of hunters and ride to hounds.''

''I believe you would!'' Helen laughed. ''Perhaps you will some day.''

Reddy grinned shamefacedly. No doubt he believed he would some day, such sublime faith had he acquired in his powers to mold the future.

"And how about Thackeray?" Helen was exceedingly interested in the boy's incursions into the field of literature.

"There are just two of Thackeray's people I really like—Colonel Newcome and Harry Warrington. But I like them a lot, almost better than all the rest."

And Reddy went on, glowing with his theme, as Helen, amazed at the critical acumen of the untutored boy, drew him on and on. At the very last he said hesitatingly:

"Hal advised me to read some 'trash,' as he called it, too, just to see how people act and talk nowadays. And I liked it fine."

When Helen drew him out to discover what he called "trash," she found he had mixed Locke, and Bennett, and Chambers, and Anthony Hope, and Mrs. Ward and the Baroness von Hutten, and Mrs. Deland and Winston Churchill and Harold Wright in a confused jumble. But he had liked it all "fine," and out of the conglomeration he had evidently winnowed much good.

"Why, Reddy, you 're wonderful!" she laughed, when he gave her a chance to break in. "I should think you 'd have mental dyspepsia after all that mass of stuff. But instead you seem to have made a wonderful success of your English out of it."

"Me father thinks I 'm improved," said Reddy, modestly, "and if you do, too, I 'm that glad." And between his delight and his blushes his nimble tongue could say no more.

"But how did you find time for it all, Reddy?"

"I 'm a fast reader," he answered naïvely. "And I just do it in odd minutes, when the boys are playing cards; or over in the Y. M. C. A. hut, when they 're playing checkers."

They talked on, first of one character and then of another; for Reddy's tongue was loosed. It is a great pleasure when one is still a new browser in the rich fields of literature to be able to talk it over with some one; and Helen was the first congenial spirit—except Hal, of course—Reddy had met who seemed to know all his favorites and like them, too.

"And now tell me, Reddy, which of them all do you like the very best?" Helen asked finally, with the intent of reading the boy through his favorites.

"Harry Warrington," responded Reddy, promptly. "Only he was such a fool to marry that horrid little pussy-cat."

"I think so too," Helen agreed.

"I can't see how he could have been so blind as to think that other girl, the one he ought to have married —I can't think of her name—"

"Hester Lambert," supplied Helen.

"Yes, that 's it, Hester Lambert—I don't see how he could think she did n't like him."

"You 're sure you would know, if it were you?" Helen asked with ill-timed pleasantry, and was immediately sorry.

Reddy turned a fiery red and then white, and his merry blue eyes were unbelievably sad as he answered soberly:

"There will never be any one in love with me, Miss Seymour—no one, that is, that I want to love in return."

"'Never' is a long word, Reddy," she answered in as matter-of-fact a tone as she could manage, and she added more gently: "I 'm sure some day there will be some one who will love you and whom you can love with all your heart."

Reddy did not deny it in words, but his eyes did, and Helen was glad when the members of the family began to drop in to await the announcement of dinner; the old residents with friendly greetings for Reddy, and the new were introduced to him as an old friend of Sunshine House; and both old and new looking their admiration, if they did not express it in words, of the tall, good-looking young soldier with the pleasant manners.

At the pretty dinner table, to the like of which Reddy, presumably, had never sat down, Helen was once more astonished at the ease with which he acquitted himself. He was plied with questions and made the center of attention after a fashion that easily might have embarrassed any young fellow who found himself the only man at a table surrounded by a bevy of pretty young women. But Reddy stood the ordeal bravely and was soon doing more than his part in the game of give and take.

"What do they call you at camp, Reddy?" Miss Roberts asked suddenly, apropos of nothing.

Reddy's face fell. For a moment he did not answer; then he looked up at Miss Roberts with a shade of sadness in his eyes that went to Helen's heart.

"You know, Miss Roberts," he said with the simplicity and directness characteristic of him, and with a swift side glance at Helen, "I have been trying to make a man of meself since I went into the army, and me old boys don't quite like it. I wish they 'd come along with me,

but they won't and it 's lonely sometimes. They hear some of the officers call me 'Pierre' and they call me 'Count Pierre.' They think it teases me, and it does; I don't like it. But sometimes they call me 'Sir Peter,' and I don't mind that much. And once in a while, when they 're real friendly, they call me 'Peter,' and that 's fine!"

"Do you like 'Peter' better than 'Reddy'?"

"Yes, Miss Roberts; it 's me name."

And that was another revelation to Helen. He was conscious of his own dignity. "Reddy" belonged to the days of careless rowdyism. With this new sense of self-respect he demanded his own name and not a nick-name.

"But I thought 'Pierre' was your name," Miss Roberts persisted.

"Oh, of course. But the boys would never be after using a name like that. I keep it for me mother and father and Julie. And perhaps the girl that loves me, if there should ever be one, will call me that some day," with a saucy glance at his questioner, though the white patches under the freckles turned crimson at his audacity.

Reddy had to set out for camp immediately after dinner, and they all went down to the door with him and crowded around him, uttering laughing good-bys. "Good-by, Sir Peter!" "Good luck to you, Sir Peter!" "Be sure to come and see us again before you sail for France, Sir Peter."

He shook hands with them all and had a jolly word for each. And then, unaccountably, they seemed to melt away and he was alone with Helen.

"Good-by, Miss Seymour," he said, and for the life of him could not utter another word.

For the last ten minutes Helen had been racking her brains. Should she call him "Reddy" when she said good-by to him, or "Peter," or "Pierre"? Not "Reddy"; he evidently felt above his old nickname. And not "Pierre"; that was to be reserved for the girl who loved him. She would call him "Peter."

And now, in response to his constrained "good-by," she heard herself saying, by no volition of her own:

"Good-by, Pierre."

He seized her hand and kissed it convulsively and rushed away without a word.

Had she done wrong?

CHAPTER XIV

A MAN OF METTLE

IT was a very much elated Reddy that went back to camp that night. Had he not acquitted himself like a real society man among those pretty young women at that pretty dinner table? Also, had he not done almost as well in the matter of repartee as his favorite Harry Warrington would have done in like circumstances? Better, he verily believed; for greatly as he admired young Warrington, Reddy had always secretly thought him rather a stupid in the society of young ladies. Reddy, being himself endowed with some native Irish wit and a goodly share of Irish self-esteem, had seen many spots in Harry's conversation, as reported by his biographer, where he felt he could have improved upon it.

But not all his elation was due to the feeling that he had acquitted himself creditably in the society of his betters; by far the larger part was owing to that gently spoken, "Good-by, Pierre." She had called him "Pierre"; what did it mean? What *could* it mean? To do Reddy justice, he did not allow himself to believe that it meant anything more than the kindly feeling she had always manifested for him; but though he thoroughly believed this, he could not altogether stifle a glimmering hope that it might have meant more.

But Reddy's elation was short-lived. It kept him

awake for an hour or two, but he woke up the next morning to a gray world, a little chillier in the early dawn than it should have been for the time of the year, and the squad for whose proper alignment and orderly entrainment he was responsible, a little more unruly than was their wont.

There was one man in Reddy's squad whom he often wished out of it. It was Fritz Swartz of the old De Bolivar Street Gang. Though Reddy could discover no open unfriendliness in him, he felt sure that a large part of the unruliness of his squad, amounting sometimes to open antagonism to his authority, was due to secret machinations of Fritz. Most of the old Gang were in Reddy's company: he himself had led them to the recruiting station, but not Fritz Swartz. He had found Fritz there ahead of him, on the morning when he made his own enlistment, and he might have been referring to him when he told Miss Seymour, in reporting to her immediately after, and with that twinkle in his eye that Helen loved: "I jined the army to try and make a man o' meself, an' whin I got to the recrootin' office I found all the old auto thieves in town there ahead o' me. Do ye think they 'll help me to improve me morals an' me manners?"

Not that Reddy minded meeting the "old auto thieves," as he called them. Most of them were boys like himself, or as he had once been, who would take a car for the sake of a joy-ride or for the spice of adventure in the taking of it, and return it if it were not smashed up in the interval. They had no low idea of stealing a car to barter it for money, and now that the war offered them all the chance of adventure their young souls

craved, they swarmed to the recruiting stations all over the country.

This latent insubordination of his squad was a real trouble to Reddy. He knew very well that if he did not make good as a corporal he would never wear the sergeant's stripes on which his ambitions were set. Nor could he quite understand the insubordination. He felt within himself those same qualities of leadership that had made the control of the De Bolivar Street Gang and the Young Citizens' Club an easy job: why should he fail now in what ought to be an easier one? Moreover, it hurt him in the seat of his affections, where Reddy was most vulnerable. Was not a large part of his squad made up of members of the old Gang? Could it be that they resented his promotion over them? or his attempts at self-improvement—his better English and more sophisticated manners? There were moments when Reddy was half inclined to give up his ambitious project of "making a man of himself" if it was to cost him his old friendships.

But one day at Fort Barry when he had had a particularly trying time with his squad, and his sergeant looked askance at him, or Reddy fancied he did, he sat down and wrote two letters. One was to his father and one to Miss Seymour, and the two letters were identical in subject-matter and almost in wording. Also, when the answers came the answers were very nearly identical in subject-matter, though not in wording.

In his letters Reddy had confided all his troubles and also his two surmises as to their source—either the machinations of Fritz Swartz or his own attempts at self-improvement. And in both letters he asked for advice.

The advice was practically the same. His father said: "I would see that Fritz Swartz privately and light into him. If he is making the trouble, give him to understand that you will report him to the authorities and he will stand in danger of a court martial. Then I would see the rest of the Gang in a body and give them a talking to, straight from the shoulder. Let them know that you have stood their pernickitiness long enough and that there are severe punishments in store for insubordination. If it 's all a matter of jealousy because you are leaving them behind in the race for social supremacy, then go ahead and give them the talk all the same, and report the very first appearance of anything like insubordination. Jack up the fellow that shows it so quick that he won't know what has struck him. Give him no time to make objections or excuses, and I think you will find the one example will be sufficient for the squad. But as for giving up your efforts at self-improvement—never! Go straight ahead, and in the end the boys will respect you all the more."

Miss Seymour said practically the same, but she added a little more: "Win those boys, Reddy. You can do it. And remember always they are the same kind of flesh and blood as yourself. Look into your own heart and you will learn how to win them."

When Reddy first read this last admonition he flushed indignantly and exclaimed under his breath—for there were others in his tent—"Rot! I 'm no mollycoddler to baby up the boys, and they 're no mollycoddles: they would n't stand for it."

But the more he thought of Helen's advice, the stronger became its appeal to him. There were many of

them the same boys who had once adored him as their "chief"; what if he could win back their adoration? Reddy's warm Irish heart glowed at the thought. He determined, however, to act on the advice in the order it was given: he would first interview the boys and let them have it straight and then he would see what could be done toward winning them. Preliminary to these interviews he called on his captain.

"Have I your permission, sir, to send any recalcitrant members of my squad to you for correction if I should find it necessary?" he asked, after the first formalities of greetings had been interchanged.

Captain Thomas was amused at Reddy's use of "recalcitrant." He thought it rather a mouthful for the rough Irish lad he had watched so rapidly developing into the amenities. The captain knew a little of Reddy's troubles with his squad; he had had an informal talk with Sergeant Moran about it. Now he said, as gently as possible, and laying a hand on Reddy's shoulder in the fatherly fashion that endeared him to the men of his company:

"Do you think, Pierre, it is possible you are a little young to be controlling such rough fellows? How old are you?"

Reddy flushed painfully. It had come, the very thing he had been dreading: he was to be reduced to the ranks! He answered with difficulty:

"Nearly twenty, sir."

"What, only nineteen! I don't wonder you have trouble with your men. You must be the youngest corporal in the army!"

And then, as Reddy made no reply, only stood with

eyes on the floor and clenched fists, he added still more gently:

"How would you like, Pierre, to wait until you're a little older before you try the very arduous duties of a corporal? I sometimes think it 's the most difficult position in the army."

"Do you mean go back to the ranks, sir?" Reddy raised his eyes and faced his captain resolutely.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," said the tender-hearted captain, wilting a little under Reddy's desperate eyes.

"I suppose, sir, that you 've been hearing that I 'm not controlling me squad?"

Reddy was determined to go to the root of the matter.

"Well, yes, hearing a little, and noticing a little myself."

"It 's true, sir; I 've not. But I think it 's largely owing to the machinations of one man who is determined to make me trouble. I think perhaps he would like to get my chevrons for himself. I was about to have an interview with him and I wanted your permission to send him to you if I found he was more than I could manage. But if I 'm to be degraded to the ranks"—in spite of his desperate efforts at self-control Reddy's voice trembled a little—"it 'll be no use; I need n't bother you."

"Send him to me, by all means," said the captain, heartily, "and I 'll put him in the guard-house, or send him to the stone wall, whichever you think he deserves. And if you think you can manage him and whip your squad into shape, we won't think of taking off the chevrons at present, Pierre."

"Give me a little time, sir," said Reddy, touched to

the quick by the captain's kindness and now on the very verge of tears. "If I don't get them into better shape in a week, then I 'll step down."

"Take a month, Pierre; that is little enough time. You 'll do it, I believe," and he added as Reddy saluted, about to depart: "Call on me if you need any help, and good luck to you!"

Reddy went straight from the captain's presence to find Fritz. The last place he expected to find him was in his tent, and it was the last place he looked for him. And Fritz was doing the very last thing Reddy would have expected to find him doing. Seated on the edge of his cot, he was laboriously writing a letter with pencil, moistened at the tip. Apparently not pleased at the advent of a visitor, he looked up with a scowl which deepened as he saw who his visitor was. He held his pencil suspended, the point in his mouth, ready to indite the next word in the blackest of moist graphite, as soon as the unwelcome visitor should depart.

"May I come in?" asked Reddy, pleasantly.

"Ef yeh like," Fritz growled ungraciously.

"I was looking for you, to ask you to come to my tent," Reddy went on, still pleasantly, and ignoring Fritz's discourtesy. "I wanted to talk to you. If you don't mind we can have our talk here."

"Spit it out!" still more ungraciously from Fritz.

Reddy flushed. His temper was a quick one and it was hard to brook Fritz's rudeness. But if he was to accomplish his purpose he must keep himself well in hand.

"See here, Fritz," he said, half jestingly, half seriously, "if we were still in the De Bolivar Gang I would

invite you over to Flannigan's Lot and we 'd fight it out. But I can't do that, so I think you 'd better tell me what 's the matter and we 'll talk it out."

"Nothin' 's the matter with *me,*" pointedly.

"Then what 's the matter with me?"

"You knows, I reckon. Airs, fur one thing."

Reddy would have liked almost any other accusation better.

"See here, Fritz,"—there was no question of his seriousness now—"there are no 'airs,' as you call it, about me and you know it. But this manner of yours has got to stop. I should be mighty sorry to send you to the captain, but I 'll do it unless you show yourself willing to come under discipline."

"Discipline!" jeered Fritz. "Send me to the captain ef yeh darst. I 'd like the chanst to tell 'im a few things."

"Very well, I will. But I give you fair warning if I do, it will be either the guard-house or a stone wall. I shall report to him that you have been stirring up trouble in the squad, inciting them to insubordination and possibly sedition. And you know what that means: it would come under the espionage act, and conviction would mean the stone wall."

Reddy pronounced it "es-spy-on-age," with a good American pronunciation of each syllable and accent on the "spy." He had not expected his random shot to tell; but it did. Fritz's surliness dropped from him in a flash; he was white and trembling.

"See here, Reddy," he begged abjectly, "yeh would n't do an ole pal like that! I own up; I 've treated yeh mean, but I won't no more."

"Very well," said Reddy, easily placated, but following up his advantage. "I don't want to get you in bad with the captain, and I won't, if you act white. But I tell you, right now, that the very first symptom I observe of insubordination on your part, or any attempt to incite the rest of the squad to insubordination, you go straight to the captain on a charge of espionage."

Reddy wheeled and marched out of the tent, and Fritz, stiff with awe of Reddy's "dictionary words," he called them, and cold with fright at his threat, unconsciously stood at salute until he was gone—an honor which Reddy's corporal's chevrons did not demand and had never before received.

Reddy knew that it was wise to see the rest of the squad before there was any chance of Fritz's reporting the interview with him. Fritz would be on guard-duty that evening; he summoned his squad to meet him immediately after evening mess. And he had learned a lesson. Fritz had taught him to grasp the nettle like a man of mettle and it "soft as silk remains." Also, he intended to be brief. His first words were:

"I have summoned you to make an announcement. I have stood your insubordination exactly as long as I intend to. To-morrow the member of this squad that shows the first sign of anything else than willingness to do as he 's told, cheerfuly and promptly, will make a discovery that will possibly prove not to his liking. The penalty may be only the loss of his month's pay, but it may be something far worse. Good-night, gentlemen." And Reddy wheeled and walked off, his head high but his heart horribly depressed. For if there was one thing Reddy craved, it was the *love* of his boys, and he felt

now that he had probably alienated them for all time.

The squad stood and looked at one another. They had answered Reddy's summons—some of them surly, some of them grumbling, some of them scornful and sarcastic, ready to sneer at anything he might have to say. He had given them no time to sneer, and they stood and looked at one another half dazed.

"D'yeh think he means it?" tremblingly ventured one scared soul.

"Naw! he tinks he kin skeer us, but he cain't," responded the boldest, Daredevil Bill.

"P'raps he 's right. I 'd hate to lose me pay," one of the doubtful ones murmured.

"Lose yer pay nutt'n! Me Lord Pierre's a big bluffer. Jest watch 'im to-morrer, wen he finds we cain't be bluffed. He 'll git as red as a turkey-cock an' be ready to bawl like anny baby, an—"

But Jim O'Hara gave him no chance to finish. Jim had always been secretly loyal to Reddy, but fear of his mates had kept him from showing his loyalty. Now love, the strongest thing in the world, drove out all fear from his weak soul; for the moment he was strong.

"Shet yer mouth, Hank Smith!" he shouted. "Reddy 's no baby, I tells yeh! An' he 's no liar, neither. Wat he says goes, every time. We 've been treatin' 'im meaner 'n dirt an' I fur wan don't see why. Jes' cuz Fritz Swartz hates 'im an' ye 're afeared o' yer life o' Fritz Swartz. I tells ye now I 'm more afeared o' Reddy than o' Fritz, an' from now on I 'm goin' to behave meself. Youse kin lose yer pay ef ye like, er git stood up against a stone wall—I hears in war time it 's de stone wall for mutiny, an' I guess that 's wat we bin a-doin'.

But I 'm goin' to ack like a man an' a patriot. I kind o' tink we 've all bin traitors. Take it or leave it—that 's wat I says. Good-night to youse."

And he walked off, leaving the squad still more dazed at the eloquence of Jim, who had never before dared call his soul his own, but some of them, at least, roused to a clearer way of thinking.

When Reddy had walked off with his head high and his heart low, he was for a moment in a blue funk. He had noted the air with which the squad had answered his summons—surly, obstinate, sneering—and he had not taken time to note any change in their air. He did not believe he had accomplished anything by his speech and he had cut himself off from any retreat. If they were no more amenable to discipline in the morning he would have no alternative but to send them to the captain, the last thing in the world Reddy wanted to do.

But the blue funk did not last beyond the length of the white-tented street he was pacing. He came out on a woodland road bordering the camp, with a little stream following the windings of the road until it was crossed by a stone-arched bridge a hundred yards ahead. It was broad daylight and would be for some hours yet, thanks to the setting forward of the clocks; he would go for a walk on that road where the evening shadows lay cool and inviting after the blazing day, and he would get himself in hand and find out why he was such a miserable failure, as he was beginning to regard himself.

For two hours Reddy walked fast and thought hard—harder, more clearly, more thoroughly to the point than he had ever thought before in his young life. He decided the fault was in himself and not in the boys, and

he thought he had discovered at least some of the causes of his failure. Prominent among these he believed to have been a too great absorption in his own plans for self-improvement and too little interest in the individuals of his squad. The boys resented his better English and accused him of "putting on airs," but they would not have so accused him if he had shown himself the hail-fellow, well met, the good mixer they had once known, entering into all their sports and jokes with his old zest.

He felt himself an older and a wiser man as he came in sight once more of the stone-arched bridge on the borders of the city of tents, and found Jim O'Hara leaning against a parapet of the bridge, smoking a pipe and evidently waiting for him.

"Hello, Jim; howdy!" he said as he came up. "What are you doing here, all by yourself?"

"Waitin' fur youse," said Jim sturdily, but not quite daring to lift his eyes to Reddy's. "Cain't ye stop an' rest a minut?"

"Of course I will; but what makes you think I 'm tired?"

"I seen ye startin' off, an' I tried to ketch up to yeh, but ye wuz goin' to beat the band an' I guv it up, and waited fur ye here, instid."

"Why, Jim! have you been waiting all that time! It 's too bad! I would n't have taken such a long walk if I had dreamed you were waiting for me."

Reddy had lifted himself to the flat top of the parapet and was sitting at ease, legs swinging.

" 'S no matter," said Jim, growing red and fidgeting.

"You wanted to see me about something?" Reddy thought he would give him a boost.

"Yep. I ain't goin' to treat ye mean no more," Jim blurted out desperately. "I never did want to be mean to yeh, but I wuz skeered o' Fritz Swartz, I guess. But I ain't goin' to be skeered o' nobuddy no more, 'ceptin' you. I 'se goin' to walk er chalk line an' the boys kin laugh ef they likes."

Nothing in his experience as a soldier had ever warmed Reddy's heart as did this repentant confession. The defection of Jim O'Hara had been particularly hard to bear, for in the old days Jim had been his most loyal follower.

"Spoken like a man, Jim! Give me your hand on it. With you to back me I 'll soon have the squad in line." And Reddy reached down from his high perch and gravely took the hand that Jim, flushed and beaming at Reddy's praise, reached up to him.

Reddy dropped to sleep an hour later with the pleasant conviction that his battle was half won. Fritz was scared into submission and Jim's heart was touched. With those two to back him he believed he could bring the whole squad into form easily within the prescribed month.

And the next morning he found it was not half, but almost entirely won. No doubt there would be trouble in the future, but on that morning no more orderly squad in the company went through drill and every other duty cheerfully and promptly.

Reddy did not know that he had any observers of his orderly squad, but behind a half-drawn curtain of a mess-room facing the drill-ground stood his captain and Sergeant Moran, watching him with lively interest.

"I think he 'll do, Sergeant," said the captain, turn-

ing to Moran as Reddy marched his squad off the field.

"I allays said, sor, that the bye had the makin' of a gineral in 'im," said Sergeant Moran proudly, "an' perhaps now, sir, you 'll agree with me."

CHAPTER XV

REDDY'S LIEUTENANT

REDDY'S troubles were not over, but he had found himself. If his squad was not the prize squad in the regiment, it stood well up among the average. A look was sufficient to bring Jim O'Hara to repentance, and he could control Fritz Swartz with a word of reminder that he was still on probation. And though he had no such hold on the other men, they were very likely to follow Fritz's lead or Jim's.

His captain was satisfied with him and told him so, which pleased Reddy but did not satisfy him. He would never be satisfied until his squad was far above the average, and still less would he be satisfied until he could be sure that he had won the men's love.

His opportunity came to him, as all opportunities seemed to come to Reddy.

The first long hike for the regiment took place, as luck would have it, on the hottest day of the year. The thermometer registered nearly a hundred and ten; the men's packs weighed something like eighty pounds, and their rifles were no feather-weights.

The start was made early in the morning, while there was still a little freshness in the air, and the boys were in good spirits. Sergeant Moran gave Reddy an appreciative glance as his smart-looking squad lined up; and Captain Thomas spoke a word of praise.

"They 're all right, Pierre," he said, with smiling eyes, and Reddy's heart glowed. He adored Captain Thomas. But Lieutenant Snider, to whose platoon Reddy's squad belonged, was not so amiable: "Corporal, what 's the matter with that man's pack?" "Corporal, your squad 's out of line." "Corporal Paschal, see if you can't keep your men in better order; number four is not at attention."

It was terribly irritating to Reddy, but he did his best to receive the lieutenant's half-sneering corrections respectfully. He never expected to please Lieutenant Snider; some day he would ask his captain to put him in another platoon.

It was a relief to be off, for it seemed to Reddy that the lieutenant kept hanging around his squad with a microscope to discover the minutest defects in equipment and discipline. A button on one man's coat was a little loose; the tip of a rifle needed a brighter polish; one man had not shaved close enough; another's woolen puttees were not wound in perfect symmetry, until Reddy was ready to fly.

But once under way everything was forgotten but the delight of swinging along on a fresh and dewy morning over the woodland road that he had tramped so unhappily not three weeks before. Nothing could make Reddy unhappy this morning. Despite the lieutenant's carping criticisms he knew his squad was in good shape; and he had a letter from Miss Seymour in his pocket, received the day before, that he intended to take out and re-read if he could find a quiet spot at the noon rest.

The men swung ahead in the best of spirits; jokes and laughter rolled along the line, where discipline was in a

measure relaxed. To the men this was no forced military march but a grand picnic. They were bound for a mountain resort, thirty miles away, where summer hotels, casinos, and all the paraphernalia of such resorts were to be thrown open to them. They were to stop half-way for a hot lunch provided by the regiment's cooks, gone on ahead in army trucks; this was forced marching *de luxe*. But it was the regiment's first long hike and the "high command" was making it attractive for them.

Discipline was relaxed as far as talking and laughing and singing were concerned; as long as there was no lagging and they kept in step and in line, their officers were satisfied; and for the first few miles it was a gala procession winding through a green and wooded country, the elasticity of youth in their springing steps, the ring of triumphant youth in their fresh young voices, young as the dewy morning through which they marched.

But the day advanced. The bosky groves and fair green fields deserted them, swept away toward the distant horizon, leaving only bare brown earth, denuded of its ripened wheat, bordering the dusty roads. The relentless sun of August beat down intolerably on the men's heads and, reflected from the hot sands, beat up into their faces in scorching waves. One by one the happy voices were stilled and the springing steps began to lag. In vain lieutenants, sergeants, corporals encouraged, urged, scolded, commanded, swore at the men, according to each officer's temper; the line lagged more and more and here and there a man dropped out and was picked up by one of the attending ambulances.

Reddy, miserable enough himself under the intolerable weight of that heavy pack and the agony of the burning

sun, was able to forget his own sufferings in his anxiety for his men. His men would never forget him as he showed himself to them on that first real experience of grim war. His sympathetic "Tough, is n't it, Bill?" or his jolly "*C'est la guerre,* Jim"—that much French they all knew—squared drooping shoulders and put spring into lagging heels.

He was nervously dreading a visit from his lieutenant, fearing his nagging would prove the last straw to the men's drooping spirits, and it came just when Reddy had begun to feel he could not endure much more. Jim O'Hara had turned deadly white and Reddy, alert for symptoms of heat-prostration, saw it, got him to the side of the road, and summoned the ambulance. It was as he was taking his place back in the line that Lieutenant Snider appeared.

"What are you doing out of line, Paschal?" he snarled.

"Putting a sick man into the ambulance, sir," Reddy answered with what calmness he could muster.

"Who 's sick?"

"Private James O'Hara, sir."

"Shamming, no doubt. See there 's no more babying of your men; I don't believe in it. It 's strange that the only man sick in my platoon should belong to your squad."

To this Reddy made no reply, and after a few more snarling call-downs for petty delinquencies the lieutenant marched off with an exaggerated assumption of an easy, springing gait.

A black thunder-cloud settled on the men's faces. Reddy could catch the rumble of curses, not loud but

deep, and mutterings that were intended to be overheard: "I could march, too, ef I did n't have no pack to carry." "An' he ain't even got no rifle, jest one o' them ottermatics." "Yeh would n't get no line o' talk like that from de cap'n." "No, ner from de corporal, nuther."

Reddy had not heard much that the men were saying: his own blood was boiling, and the blackest thunder-cloud in the squad brooded over his laughter-loving eyes. Inwardly he was planning ways and means of vengeance, or relief. He would go to his captain the first thing in the morning and ask for a change of platoons, and if Captain Thomas should ask him why, much as he hated to be a tale-bearer he would tell him that his position at the mercy of a nagging lieutenant was unbearable.

And then, just as he was working himself up into a fine frenzy of hate and fury over the indignities he had been suffering, and deploring the ethics of the service that would not permit him to fight it out with his superior officer, a sentence from the letter he carried in his pocket flashed into his brain. "Keep your temper, Reddy," Helen had written: "you 'll find it 's the only way to manage men and win your way."

And as the admonition began to have the effect that any word of advice from Helen would always have, and he began to cool down and no longer see red but instead a pale and philosophic pink, he caught the utterance of one of the men, "Betcher 'd never git a line o' talk like that from the corporal," and Reddy was himself again.

"*C'est la guerre,* boys!" he said, with a gay little toss of his head peculiar to him, and a smile like sunshine breaking through a thunder-cloud that made every man

in the squad happier and not quite so tired for at least the fraction of a minute.

But Reddy's quick eye, as he turned to smile at the boys, had caught something.

"Hello! What have we here!" he called quickly. "Here, Fritz, give me that pack, and some of you boys take turns carrying his gun. We can't have another ambulance case on our hands: the lieutenant will never stand for it."

In a twinkling he had the pack off Fritz's shoulders and on his own, and though Fritz demurred feebly he was too far gone really to remonstrate. One of the men took Fritz's gun and Reddy poured him a drink from his own canteen, for Fritz's was exhausted.

"Now, do you think you can make it, Fritz?" he asked kindly. "If you don't, I 'll call the ambulance, but I 'd rather bring the rest of my squad in on their own feet."

"I 'm all right, sir," said Fritz, bitterly ashamed and using the "sir" unconsciously, "but I hates to have yeh carry me pack."

"You need n't mind that," Reddy laughed; "I 'm strong as an ox. And it can't be over a mile or two more before we halt for dinner. Are you all right? Forward, march!" And to the lilting tune of "A Hot Time in the Old Town," led by Reddy's ringing tenor, the squad marched through that grilling sun and sand with never another grumble. And in an incredibly short time they were rushing from the burning sand into a bit of woodland by the roadside and flinging their packs on the ground and themselves on the cool cushion of humus under the grateful shade, and for a while all their troubles were over.

And such a dinner they had never tasted—or so they thought—as that they were summoned to when they had had time to cool off and rest a bit; and as a special treat the high command had ordered ice-cream for dessert, and cool and comfortable in the innner man, they scattered to spend the remainder of the noon hour in resting on the cool ground, in laughing, singing, smoking, story-telling groups.

Reddy had planned his noon recreation and after a visit to the ambulance, where he found Jim resting comfortably and almost recovered from his heat-prostration, he hunted up the ideal spot he knew he could find, shut away by tall trees and low bushes from all observation, and drew forth his precious letter. He already knew it word for word; but the written characters conveyed—or he thought they could—some meaning that his memory would not give them. He was delving for hidden meanings, for some deeper feeling than that kindly interest he knew in his heart was all he had ever received or could ever expect from Helen.

He was still twisting and turning each phrase, in the forlorn hope of extorting from it something that was not there, when he was startled by a slight noise and looked up quickly to find Fritz Swartz looking down on him.

"Well, what is it?" Reddy spoke sharply, for he felt as if Fritz had been spying on him.

But Fritz took the sharpness meekly.

"I jes' wants to tell yeh, Peter, that I think it wuz mighty white o' yeh to carry my pack fur me and I wants to thank yeh fur 't. I 'm all right now, an' I kin carry it myself the rest o' the way."

"Sure?" asked Reddy, much more kindly.

"Yep."

"All right then, Fritz, but you know we can't have you dropping out on the march; the lieutenant won't stand for it."

And then, as Fritz said nothing but also made no movement to go, Reddy added, "Sit down and rest a bit."

Fritz sat down but still said nothing, though evidently he had something on his mind. Reddy did his best to give him a chance to unburden himself, by various comments on the weather and the march, that elicited no response from Fritz. At last Reddy, feeling that this delicious hour that he had proposed to spend with Miss Seymour was fast slipping away, spoke a little impatiently: "What is it, Fritz? Out with it!"

"D'yeh recolleck wat I wuz doin' wen yeh come in my tent t 'other day?" Fritz managed to squirm out.

Reddy remembered very well. He had thought of it several times since, and more than once with some disquietude. Why should Fritz have gone off by himself to write? The boys usually wrote in the Y. M. C. A. hut. And why had he hastily covered up his letter as soon as he saw Reddy was going to enter the tent and probably get within range of his writing? It had annoyed Reddy, for he was as punctilious about reading other people's writing as any one to the manner born could have been. At the time he had attributed Fritz's caution to the probability that he was writing to his "girl," but later other suspicions had suggested themselves. He answered Fritz pointedly:

"I remember very well. You were writing a letter under very peculiar circumstances."

Fritz glanced up quickly and looked down as quickly.

"I don't haf to tell yeh! Only, yeh treated me white an' I thought I otter," Fritz mumbled surlily.

"Tell me what?"

Reddy's tone was sharper than he intended; his suspicions were to be verified.

"Oh, nutt'n," said Fritz, half rising from the stump where he had seated himself at Reddy's bidding.

Reddy realized he was not being very tactful.

"See here, Fritz," he said pleasantly, "if you 've anything on your chest you 'd better get it off: you 'll sleep better."

At the change in Reddy's tone Fritz reseated himself.

"But yeh won't tell; will yeh?" he asked as a preliminary condition.

"I won't tell if I don't have to. But it may be something I ought to tell."

"P'raps yeh ott. But I mean yeh won't tell as 't wuz me told yeh."

"No, I won't tell that," Reddy promised readily.

"Well, that letter I wuz writin' wuz to a feller as promised me ten bucks ef I 'd write him onst a week an' tell him everythin' the boys wuz doin' an' goin' to do."

"You villain!" Reddy sprang to his feet in uncontrollable excitement. "You 've been giving information to the enemy! How many letters have you written?"

Fritz had also sprung to his feet and stood facing Reddy, white but defiant.

"That wuz the fust," he said shortly.

"And you got ten dollars for it? What did you say in it, you traitor?" Reddy was trying hard to control himself, trying to keep his hands off Fritz's throat, but he could not prevent the escape of the ugly word.

"Take it back, Reddy Paschal!" Fritz threatened. "I ain't no more traitor 'n you be."

"You 've sold information for money!"

"I ain't nuther! I did n't send it."

Reddy relaxed instantly. All his flaming rage left him as quickly as it had come.

"Why did n't you?" he asked, slightly dazed.

"Cuz you come in an' talked to me like a Dutch uncle, an' I begun to think 't wa' n't right. I had n't thought much about it before; only the ten bucks looked big to me. I got another letter yesterday an' he wants to know wat 's gone with the info. An' I thought I ott to tell yeh 'bout it."

"Right, Fritz, right as rain! I beg your pardon, old man, for calling you that hell of a name. But who 's the man? He must be a German agent and we 've got to get him. How does he happen to be so flush with money? Is he rich?"

"Rich nutt'n!" said Fritz scornfully. "He 's poorer 'n my folks."

"Then he 's working for some one higher up, and we must get them both."

"Promise me yeh 'll never let him know who squealed. Yeh see," and Fritz hesitated, "he 's a neighbor, an' a kind o' friend, like."

"But how shall we get the proof? We can't nail him very well without proof."

"I dunno. But I don't want to be mixed up in it. Everybuddy's down on us German-Americans, anyhow, an' I bet there 's lots of us as good patruts an' good citizens as anybuddy."

"That 's so, but this fellow is n't, and you must help me catch him."

"I do hate to; I never would a-squealed; only you wuz so white to me this mornin', a-carryin' my pack an' all."

"That 's all right, Fritz, but you ought to be more willing to tell from a sense of duty and pure patriotism than out of gratitude to me." And then a bright idea struck Reddy.

"See here, Fritz," he exclaimed excitedly, "how would you like this scheme? You write him a letter full of information; only let me see it first—or, rather, I 'll tell you what to tell him. And then when his answer comes back—with the ten in it, probably—we 'll seize the letter, and the Secret Service will get him. He 'll never dream you squealed; he 'll think it 's censor work."

"All right," said Fritz slowly, "only . . . only . . . wat about me?"

"Oh, you 'll be all right! The Secret Service will know you were only a decoy duck."

"I don't like the name," growled Fritz. "An' wat 's more, I don't like the game. It 's mean tryin' to sell a feller wat thinks he 's yer frien'."

"It is n't half as mean," said Reddy hotly, "as trying to get information for those propagandists that they 'll use, perhaps, to blow up the whole regiment, yourself included."

"That 's so," said Fritz. "But wat 'll they do to this here feller? I would n't like him stood up."

"I don't know what they 'll do to him. He 'll get what 's coming to him, I suppose. But if he 's only a cat's-paw for some one higher up, I don't suppose they 'll

do anything worse to him than intern him for the duration of the war."

"Wat 's that?" asked Fritz, with awe.

"Shut him up in camp with a lot of Germans. He 'll be well taken care of, have better quarters and better food than he 's been used to, probably."

Fritz, convinced at last that of two evils it was better to "squeal" on an old acquaintance than to let the old acquaintance betray his regiment to the enemy, agreed; and Reddy, with whom there was never any moment like the present, set to work to write out on a leaf of his notebook such information as he thought would sound valuable and he knew would be harmless. And by the time he had finished and given it into Fritz's keeping, with instructions to write it out in his own handwriting and his own wording, the bugles were calling to fall in line.

Reddy was so elated over his attempt at detective work that he forgot to be regretful of his lost hour with Helen. Moreover, he hardly felt any fatigue. Perhaps this was partly, also, because his muscles were getting used to the strain, perhaps because the line of march began to follow the upward incline toward the mountain resort, and the air grew cooler.

None of the men seemed to feel the march as they had felt it in the morning; and when, by supper time, they had arrived at the gay little resort, the like of which many of the men had never seen, and when they had pitched their tents and been to the bath-houses for a cool shower, and then were marched to the gaily lighted hotels and put down at tables set with fine linen and pretty china, to enjoy an elaborate menu, there was not a man who remembered he had ever been tired.

And after the generous cups of coffee, with rich cream and sugar, that were served them instead of the demi-tasse on the menu, every man was ready for the diversion awaiting him at the brilliantly lighted casino—dancing, pool, cards, whatever he best liked—or, if he preferred, in the reading-room, with its books and papers and magazines and comfortable lounging-chairs, kept cool by electric fans.

It was a wonderful experience to most of the men, this treat the Government was giving them. They were to stay all the next day and on the third day they were to hike back; and they made the most of every minute of their time. Golf-links and tennis-courts were theirs, with the implements of sport gladly loaned them by their owners; there were mountains streams to whip for trout, and mountain lakes for swimming and boating, and three meals a day at the big hotels, whose guests vied with one another in showering entertainment on the boys in khaki.

It was a tired regiment that hiked back to camp on the third day, but they were a cheerful lot, recounting the glories of their expedition and ready to tumble into bed the moment the mess-supper, which they found awaiting them, hot and substantial, was over.

Reddy was as tired as the others and he was somewhat dismayed to receive a summons from Captain Thomas to present himself at his quarters at eight o'clock. Reddy had hoped to be dead asleep by eight o'clock. But there was no help for it. A plunge into the cool waters of the little river gave him courage to go through the arduous performance of a clean shave, polishing his boots and brushing his clothes, and it was a very immaculate young

corporal that presented himself to Captain Thomas promptly at eight.

Very likely the captain was tired, too; the last three days had been arduous ones for him, also. He was reclining at ease in a comfortable chair, gesticulating with a lighted cigar as he talked to a handsome young officer, when Reddy saluted at the door.

"Come in, come in, Pierre," the captain called to him pleasantly. "I want you to meet your new platoon officer, Lieutenant Jarvis. Lieutenant Snider was only temporarily in command, you know, until the new officers should come from the training-camps. Lieutenant Jarvis, this is Corporal Paschal."

Reddy had not known. How much heart-burning it might have saved him, had he known! He gave the new officer a sharp, appraising glance as he saluted. He had never heard the name before, but he liked the looks of the pleasant brown eyes, the close crop of chestnut curls, the little shoe-brush mustache and the clear, sun-browned skin.

Lieutenant Jarvis started slightly as he returned the salute. Paschal? Could this be Helen's friend? But no, that was "Reddy," and the captain had called him "Pierre"; no doubt there were many Paschals in the service. He was a good-looking young fellow, it was a shame that pasty-looking Snider had bulldozed him, as Captain Thomas said he had. Well, he would make it up to him.

And all this was flashing through his mind while he was extending his hand to Reddy and saying:

"Howdy, Corporal Paschal. I 've heard of you, I think. Glad you 're in my platoon."

CHAPTER XVI

THE CROSSING

TIRED as Reddy was, he was so elated over this change in affairs, so bubbling over with joy at getting rid of the detestable Snider, that he must needs stop at the Y. M. C. A. hut and confide his happiness to Helen, in whom also he had confided the tribulations he had been compelled to endure under his old lieutenant's rule.

"My dear Miss Seymour," Reddy wrote. He no longer began with "Respected Friend"; he had been taking some lessons in the gentle art of letter-writing.

MY DEAR MISS SEYMOUR:

We are just in from a thirty-mile hike and I 'm that tired; but I could n't go to sleep without telling you the good luck that 's come to me. *I have a new lieutenant.* And he 's the most beautiful man, and I know I 'm going to like him as well as my Captain. I think it 's all the Captain's doings. I believe he saw how Lieutenant Snider bullied me and he sent and got one of the new officers from the training-camps. I think so, because Captain Thomas sent for me to meet the new Lieutenant right away, and I 'm not sure he sent for any of the other men. I 'm glad now I did n't squeal, as I 'd half made up my mind to do, and I 'm glad I minded what you said and *kept my temper* when old Snider was his very worst.

To-morrow I 'll write and tell you all about our grand hike. Oh, it 's the life, all right! I 'm too dead tired to write any more now, but I could n't wait to tell you my good luck.

Yours till death,

PIERRE

P. S. His name is Lieutenant Jarvis.

Reddy had never dared subscribe himself "Pierre" before, but he was so happy to-night he could n't help it. He had some qualms over it and he sealed and mailed his letter quickly for fear he should repent and weakly erase it and substitute "Reddy."

Lieutenant Jarvis, after Reddy's departure, inquired from Captain Thomas whether Corporal Paschal was ever called "Reddy." The captain rather thought he was; he believed he had heard some of the men so call him. Whereupon Lieutenant Jarvis also wrote to Miss Seymour, though no doubt he would have done so without this excuse. His letter ran in part:

I think I have your friend Reddy in my platoon. He seems to be a pet with the captain, who sent for him to meet me the night I arrived, though it may be only that he was sorry for him. He says his old lieutenant bulldozed him and nagged him until young Paschal had about reached the limit of his endurance, and it was largely on his account that Captain Thomas applied for one of the new officers to take Snider's place. He gives Pierre, as he calls him—you know "Pierre" is one of the Paschal family names, so I think he must be Reddy—a fine record. He says he is the youngest corporal in the regiment and Snider gave him the toughest squad in the company. It looked for a while as if Paschal could n't manage it and would have to lose his chevrons, but he is making good and getting his squad into fine form. I 'm telling you all this because I 'm sure you 'll be interested, and I 'm writing you particularly not to tell Reddy that I 'm a friend of yours. He 's a splendid-looking chap, well set up and handsome, and I 'm a bit jealous of him when I remember your interest in him. But I 'm more afraid of his being jealous of me and taking a dislike to me for your sake, and I want to win the lad's liking. So don't tell him, please.

Ted had not left for the training-camp as soon as he had hoped: it was the middle of May before the camps

were ready for the young candidates for a commission, and in that interval he had seen much of Helen. Also, after leaving the training-camp he had spent his few days of furlough in his home town and had seen Helen twice. The second time they had taken a long drive through the county, with a late dinner at the Country Club and just time to get Helen back to Sunshine House and himself to his midnight train for Fort Barry.

It was on this drive that Helen confided to him her great secret.

"You are not to tell it to any one, Ted," she said. "No one knows it but Major Mackay—he 's head of our hospital unit, you know—and Miss Stanley, Superintendent of Nurses. I 'm going over sometime this fall as Nurse's Aid."

Ted was almost too astounded to speak.

"*You!*" he gasped.

"Yes, I! I was crazy to go over with the unit in May, but Miss Stanley said I had n't had sufficient training. I 've been training for a year, you know, but only a certain number of hours a week. Miss Stanley said if I would take three months of intensive training I could go, and I 've done it."

"But what about your settlement work? How will Sunshine House get on without you?"

"I 've not done much settlement work in the last three months, except in the evenings. But the big, tough boys, the gangs, have either all gone or are going, and they were my special care. We have a splendid corps of workers that can take care of the work. I don't believe I 'm needed any more."

"I believe it 's because Reddy 's gone that you think

Sunshine House can get on without you. You 're going to follow Reddy to France."

Helen smiled at his little outburst of jealousy: she rather liked to see it. Ted had been almost too platonic in his friendship of late.

"Why don't you say I 'm following you to France?" she asked. "But it 's neither. It 's Joffre that 's drawing me. I lost my heart to him when he presented the flag to the hospital unit last May, and I determined on the spot I would go to France, or die in the attempt."

"Do you think that was a worthy motive?" asked Ted demurely. "How about going for 'the sake of humanity,' 'for Freedom and Right'?"

"No, I don't think it was at all a proper motive!" laughed Helen, recognizing Ted's gentle dig. "But to be just to myself, I don't believe Joffre had much to do with it except to crystallize the desires I had long been cherishing. I really long to be helping on the great cause, and I can't fight."

They were almost at Sunshine House. Ted was silent a moment and then he heaved a sigh that seemed to come from his boots.

"Well, it 's all right, I suppose, but the world is surely topsyturvy! When do you expect to go?"

"I don't know, but I 'm hoping for orders any day. And then there will be my passports; they say they take forever."

"I 'm afraid you 'll get over before I do," said Ted, enviously. And then he added gravely: "I 'm not so sure I like the idea. There are the submarines, you know."

Helen laughed.

"There would n't be any excitement if it were n't for submarines; I 'm afraid it 's my only chance of proving my valor. I 'm to be stationed at a base hospital, far behind the fighting-lines."

"I 'm glad of that."

"But they do bomb the hospitals sometimes, you know."

"Beasts!" muttered Ted with set teeth, and then he added, as if it were a pleasant prospect: "Perhaps I 'll be sent to your hospital when the Huns get me."

At the door of Sunshine House he said good-by, and both he and Helen made their farewell as unsentimental as possible. He said he would send her his address with his new regiment when he got to the cantonment, and she gave him her address in France with a promise to wire him if she should receive sudden sailing-orders. Ted held her hand a little longer than was his wont, and held it a little closer, and then they both said, "Au revoir in France," and that was all.

Ted caught his midnight train and lay awake in his berth a long hour, thinking over the years of his friendship with Helen, and wishing with all his heart, now that it was too late, that he had put his fortunes to the touch.

Helen went up to her room with a grave face and a little sadness around her heart that she could not down. Had she seen the last of him? Would he ever come out of that awful holocaust, into which he would some day plunge, alive and whole? She wished she had said some gentler, sweeter word in good-by. Was he not her life-long friend, her almost brother? And then she reviled herself: he had said nothing either gentle or sweet to her;

no doubt he had long since recovered from what had proved to be a passing fancy.

When Ted's and Reddy's letters came in the same mail she was stirred by what seemed to be a happy conjunction of the Fates. It delighted her that Reddy should take at once to Ted as his lieutenant, but it gave her a little thrill that she could not account for when Ted called Reddy "well set-up and handsome." She would keep Ted's little secret for him, though how she was going to explain later to Reddy why she had not told him she knew his new lieutenant very well, she did not quite see.

And then things began to happen to Helen. The very next day brought instructions to repair to New York and await sailing-orders. She wired Ted, as she had promised, and she wrote Reddy. Ted wired back that he would see her in New York if he could possibly get a furlough. But it was not possible. He was too newly appointed, and he had to content himself with letters and flowers and candy sent to her New York hotel. The letters were very gay ones, his real feelings so perfectly "camouflaged" that Helen began to call him, to herself, hard-hearted.

Reddy's one letter, on the other hand, so poured out, with Irish eloquence, all the warmth of his Irish heart that Helen paid it the tribute of many smiles and some tears. The news of her going over had come to him like a thunderbolt, and between his amazement at the tidings, his fears for her safety, his admiration for her pluck and patriotism, and his hopes of a meeting "over there," he was well-nigh incoherent.

Helen had made the crossing several times in happier days, so that in itself was no new experience; but to be on

a boat where every passenger was a soldier, an officer, or a Red Cross, Y. M. C. A., or K. of C. worker, was entirely new, and to be convoyed out of the harbor at dead of night a thrilling experience.

She remembered gay crossings when little coteries of girls and men had all the diversions and happy experiences of a most successful house-party, but she remembered none so gay as this. There were many young women on the boat—going over, as Helen was going, to do war work—and the young officers and the young men on Red Cross or Y. M. C. A. duty gave them what they would have called "the time of their lives." Some of the girls, demure enough at home, had never before had such attentions showered upon them by such charming young fellows, the flower of the land. And for both men and girls the thrill of the Great Adventure beat in their pulses, glowed in their eyes, vibrated in the tones of their voices. They sailed over calm seas, and life on the decks those fourteen days was a great gala pageant. Even when they reached the danger zone and decks were darkened at night, and portholes closed, and boat-drills were the order of the day, the gaiety in no whit relaxed. Rather it waxed, as nerves stretched to the limit of tension watching for periscopes and listening for alarm signals, found relief in noisier gaiety that verged sometimes on the hysterical.

It could not be possible that Helen, by far the most beautiful and attractive of the young women who paced the decks of the *Aventura,* could escape some of the attentions that were lavished on less attractive ones. Not that she tried to escape them to the extent of making herself disagreeable. No matter how little a pretty

woman may desire attentions from men, she never cares to protect herself from them by making herself unattractive. Besides, Helen was herself attracted by these brave young fellows, going so debonairly to they knew not what fate. And if sometimes they displayed a little "swank," she liked that too; it was so boyish and so naïve; it reminded her of Reddy.

Among the officers in a major's uniform was one whose name Helen recognized at once as belonging to one of the most distinguished surgeons of the country. He was going over with a hospital unit of which he had charge, and Helen met him on their third day out. She had supposed their meeting was a casual one. Certainly she did not dream that, strongly attracted by the beauty of her face and the charm of her manner, as he watched her from a distance, he had manœuvered to stop to speak to two of the nurses of his unit at the moment when they were deep in conversation with her. With the informality belonging to shipboard a presentation followed, and from that moment if one was hunting for Major McClean he endeavored first to locate the group that embraced Miss Seymour.

Helen could not but feel flattered by these attentions, very quietly but very persistently offered. She had heard enough from some of the nurses in his unit to know that since the death of his wife, six years before, he had been supposed to be utterly callous to the charms of all women. That in itself was sufficiently flattering, but it was the quiet charm of the man, his keen mentality, his vivid personality, his social ease, and his air of gentle authority, that strongly attracted her. This was a man worth while. His life had not been a wasted one. He

had been no weakling, driven by every idle impulse. He had had a definite aim in life and had followed it to the very pinnacle of success. Helen knew he had given up a practice worth many thousands a year, and a place at the very head of his profession, to devote all his talent and skill to the service of the fighters in France; and that was another powerful attraction.

Moreover, he was an older man. Helen was very young and there is nothing quite so flattering to a young girl as the attentions of an older man. He was not really old, hardly more than twelve years older than Helen, but she was young enough to feel that twelve years was a tremendous difference in age, and there was a certain pretty little deference to his age and dignity, in her manner, that was very fetching. It was not that Helen was trying to employ any arts to win Major McClean; she was not at all sure she wished to win him, though he was much nearer her ideal than any man she had ever known.

It was on what was presumably their last night out, at the dinner table, that the talk turned on the fact that they had caught no glimpse of a periscope. There was some disappointment expressed by the girls, who would no doubt have been terror-stricken had one appeared.

"It 's the disappointment of my life," said Miss Evans, one of the nurses. "I'm ashamed to write home that we did n't even get a glimpse of a periscope."

"You know why?" asked a young doctor, sitting opposite.

"No, why?"

"They say the Kaiser 's a heavy stockholder in this line."

"I 've heard an entirely different reason," said Miss

Brown, also a nurse. "I 've heard that this line carries the German mail, for Switzerland, ostensibly."

"And the German spies," said Helen. "Have n't you heard that?"

They all laughed.

"One reason is as good as another," said Major McClean; "but it does seem to be a fact that this line is immune. Personally, I 'm not sorry to have missed the periscopes."

Up on deck, watching the last of the sunset, the major manœuvered to get Helen off from the crowd.

"I want you to promise me something, Miss Seymour," he said, bending confidentially toward her.

"What is it?"

"I 'm going to try to get you transferred to my unit, and I want you to say you will come if I succeed."

"Oh, no!" said Helen, hurriedly. "Don't try, please! I 'm to be with my own home unit, with our home doctors and nurses. And our home men will be taken there when they 're wounded."

And in a vivid flash she saw Ted and Reddy brought in, shattered by shrapnel, with her not there to help them and comfort them. She had not thought much of either through the last week: there was something so compelling in Major McClean's personality that it effaced the images of others as with a wet sponge when she was under its magnetic influence. The decks were rapidly darkening; there was no moon and there would soon be no light but the pale light of stars.

"Come, walk with me," said the major, abruptly.

Helen turned and walked by his side, a little troubled. His voice had sounded strained, almost harsh. He had

never before tried to carry her off, away from the others, and he had always, heretofore, been the quintessence of courtesy. She was afraid of what this harshness might portend.

She felt like trying to run away. She did not want to come to any decision. She liked the man so much; she admired him so greatly; he was her ideal in looks, in character, in temperament, in everything. But that lightning-like vision of Ted and Reddy had revealed to her that she did not yet feel toward him as she felt to the old friend of her youth, or even to the boy whose idol she knew herself to be. And she was not ready to give up those two so long dear to her for this man she hardly knew, who dazzled and fascinated and bewildered her until she could hardly trust her own judgment.

She racked her brain for an excuse to slip away from him, and was on the point of saying she must go to her cabin and finish her packing while there was still a little daylight left. But glancing up at him she saw his face set in such stern lines, eyes straight ahead, striding forward with little regard as to whether she kept pace with him or not, his face in the dim light so stern and forbidding that she did not dare break in on the thoughts that evidently were absorbing him. Well, if it must come, it must, but she would put him off. She would not give him a definite answer, she could not on so short an acquaintance. Yet she had a terrible fear that he might sweep her off her feet—he was so masterful, so compelling—and she did not want to be swept away; she wanted time to consider, to debate.

She would have given much to avert the crisis so surely and swiftly impending, but she could see no loophole of

escape. And then suddenly one was made for her. From the crow's-nest came a sharp, excited cry, "A U-boat!" It was echoed from the forward watch and from the officer on the bridge.

In a moment all was excitement. The alarm-signal sounded, the sailors sprang to their stations at the life-boats, the gun crews to their guns, the passengers hurried to find life-belts and the boats to which they were assigned, and the soldiers drew up in long lines on the decks as if on dress parade.

Major McClean turned to Helen.

"Wait here a moment," he said quietly, "and I will bring you a belt."

The strain had vanished from his face and voice and in spite of her fear Helen experienced a quick sense of relief.

He was back in a minute with the belt, which he adjusted deftly, and then led the way to Helen's lifeboat, the space about which was already rapidly filling. Here he stopped and extended his hand.

"Good-by, Miss Seymour," he said gravely; "I 've two sick men I must look after. If I do not see you again I want you to know that this brief acquaintance has meant much to me."

And before Helen could think of anything to say in reply, and while she was still watching him striding swiftly down the deck, and wishing she had been able to say something nice in return, the booming of the forward guns, two of them in quick succession, shook the ship from stem to stern, and was echoed by faint, quickly suppressed shrieks from Miss Evans and some of the more timorous.

The reverberations had not died away when the signal "All danger over" was sounded. Crew and passengers had been quiet enough while they thought themselves in peril, each one taking his place silently at his station. But at the sudden relief bedlam broke forth—excited questions shouted, with no one to answer; happy laughter; an occasional hysterical sobbing of joy. In the dim light, to the straining eyes of the watch, a floating hogshead had taken on the proportions of a U-boat, until the accurate aim of the gunners revealed its innocent nature.

In the evening of hysterical gaiety that followed there was no chance for serious conversation of any kind, and in the early gray of the dawn, in the confusion of disembarking and entraining for Paris, Helen found herself in a crowded compartment "for women only," and had only an occasional glimpse of Major McClean at stations en route, when he came to her window to inquire after her comfort.

Helen was glad, for in the watches of the night, too excited to sleep, she had arrived at a definite conclusion. She had come to France with one single aim—to devote every hour of her day and every atom of her strength and energy to the care of the wounded. And until this hideous war was over there should be no place in her mind or heart for thoughts or desires of loving and marrying.

CHAPTER XVII

IN THE FOG

IT was a very different crossing for Ted and Reddy. Helen crossed in the early autumn of 1917; they crossed when the Germans made their great offensive in the following March, and England uttered her frantic call for help—"Send us men and send them quickly!"

It had been a wonderful winter to Reddy—that winter in the cantonment—and no less wonderful to Ted. Their friendship had grown apace; it was easy for Ted to see what had so attracted Helen in Reddy. The lilting spirits of the lad—reacting sometimes in moods of deep depression, as needs must from his Irish temperament—was a strong attraction in itself. But there was something more than temperament in Reddy, and his camp experiences were developing in him, or creating, the finer traits of character. He had joined the army with the ambition—laudable enough in itself but somewhat narrow—of making a man of himself. He had studiously cultivated the extraneous matters of speech and manner; he had given no thought to the weightier matters of the soul. That long hike had been perhaps his real awakening, when he was compelled to control his temper, to which he had been in the habit of giving free rein, and when he had forgotten his own sufferings in his sympathy with and anxiety for his men.

One remark of Fritz's had touched him, also, and awakened in him a better feeling toward a class he was inclined to regard with some distrust. Fritz had said: "They 're always suspecting us German-Americans, and we 're lots of us just as loyal and patriotic as anybody." Reddy began to feel some sympathy for them in a position that must needs be a trying one, forever subject to the suspicion of the American-born and yet doing their utmost to prove themselves loyal to their adopted land against all the odds of a lingering affection for the Fatherland and of the ties of kindred.

Reddy would probably never be very fond of Fritz; he had not liked him very well in the old gang days, but Fritz's dog-like devotion to Reddy came near to being pathetic, and could not but touch Reddy's heart, whose supreme desire was to be loved.

His amateur detective work had turned out much better than such efforts often do, or deserve to do. Of course Reddy should have reported the matter to his superior officers and let them deal with it. He might easily have bungled and failed to net the fish for which his bait was so carefully set, but Reddy's usual good luck was with him. He waited until Fritz had mailed the doctored information before reporting the matter to Captain Thomas. The captain was inclined to censure him for taking such grave matters into his own hands without authority, but Reddy's naïve delight in his own acuteness touched his superior's heart, always a little weak where Reddy was concerned, and for censure he substituted the damnation of faint praise.

It turned out as Reddy had confidently expected it to. The reply to Fritz was intercepted and handed over to

the Secret Service; Fritz's friend was found to be only a cat's-paw, but a dangerous one, and was interned for the duration of the war; and the man higher up was arrested. What became of him Reddy never heard, but the young corporal felt that he had saved his country from destruction, and was duly elated. And, since his efforts had proved successful and of real importance, he was praised by his officers, which added to his elation.

In fact, in these days Reddy was a little in danger of being spoiled. His vanity was always a weak point with him; it was a little in danger of becoming overweening. And there was where Ted came in. He had taken a real liking to Reddy for his admirable qualities, but the elder-brotherly interest that he began to take in him, when he saw him in danger of being betrayed by his weakness, was for Helen's sake. He dropped into the habit of asking Reddy to go for an occasional walk along that woodland path by the banks of the little river. And on those walks he talked to him of the great underlying motives of the war; the history of its beginnings, back in the twelfth century; the immediate causes—the military party in Germany like the robber knights of the twelfth century, their ancestors, desiring to seize for themselves the lands belonging to others; and the overweening vanity of the Kaiser, which had led him to regard himself as a greater Napoleon; and his ambition, fostered by the dream of his childhood, to become the ruler of the world. He showed Reddy how, with this aim in view, the military party in Germany had worked indefatigably for forty years, the latter part of the time at fever heat, to be ready when the excuse should offer to seize it. Serajevo had furnished the excuse—there were those who said the assassi-

nation of the heir to the throne had been planned by the Austro-Germans themselves, to furnish the excuse and to relieve Austria of the embarrassment of having an emperor with a morganatic wife—and little Serbia had been made the victim.

Ted delved still deeper into the political history of Europe, and Reddy listened eagerly. New worlds were opening before him. Hitherto his horizon had been circumscribed by the petty doings of his every-day life; now his soul awoke and longed to have a part in these great world movements.

Ted did not give him this encyclopædia of world history all in one dose; there was a chapter on one walk and a chapter on another, until Reddy began to look forward to these walks as to the continuation of an exciting serial. His own small ambitions dwindled and he longed to be helping to set the world free from that autocratic imperialism that Ted said was a relic of the Middle Ages, and had survived in its crude absolutism in Germany alone of the so-called civilized nations of the world. And when Ted eloquently pictured his own country entering this world war from the purest of motives, the loftiest of ideals, and the young men of the country pouring overseas on a crusade of a far higher and nobler type than the crusades of old, Reddy's impressionable soul was on fire.

He no longer sought society novels in the camp library; it was history he called for, and especially the history of the Crusades. And all that he read, and all that Ted told him, filtered through his talk to his men—who, though not so impressionable as Reddy, could not help catching a little of his ardor—until Corporal Paschal's

squad came to be known as "The Crusaders," a title which they bore rather sheepishly but also somewhat proudly.

The winter was put in in intensive training, and so great was the zeal of the men in marksmanship, in bayonet-drill, in grenade-throwing, that the British and the French officers who came to give them the finishing touches declared there was nothing left for them to do, and departed, after a day or two of inspection, to the openly expressed pride of the men and the only half-concealed satisfaction of the officers, to whom the perfection of the regiment's training was due.

Then came the call in March and the first of April saw the regiment breaking camp and entraining for Camp Mills preparatory to embarking. To Reddy, whose only journeys had been those he had taken in coming to Fort Barry and on his furlough home at Christmas time, the trip to New York was an exciting adventure; and a day's leave from the embarkation camp, to visit the great city, was more crowded with thrills than any one day in all his nineteen years.

There came a day when, in the early gray of the dawn, the regiment embarked on a great ocean steamer, curiously camouflaged, and the men were forbidden to show so much as the peak of a hat until they were well under way down the beautiful bay, steaming out into the great ocean where low-lying gray war-dogs were to take them in charge.

"I 'm having a thrill every minute," Reddy declared to Lieutenant Jarvis, when at last the men were allowed on deck and Ted came around to see how Reddy was liking it. "You know, sir, I never even saw the sea be-

fore," he went on, "and I don't think I ever dreamed how big and lonely it is."

The sea was a little rough; some of the men were lying around, and most of them were a trifle paler than was natural.

"Have you been at all sick?" Ted asked.

"Not a qualm, sir. And I 'm loving everything. I love the idea of sleeping in a hammock, and the meals are fine. I only wish I could get up into that crow's-nest where they send the watch; I 'd like it fine."

"Very likely you can," Ted answered. "I think I 've heard they 're going to call for volunteers for watch-duty. You see, with so many ships running, it 's hard to get full crews, and they set so many extra watches they can't spare the men."

Sure enough, the captain called for a volunteer watch, and while many more volunteered than could possibly be used, Reddy, possibly through Ted's influence, got his wish. The second day out he was sent aloft with minute instructions as to how to report; and there alone, swaying far above the world, gazing down with intense eyes into a tumbling, foaming sea, this boy of the Middle West felt his soul grow large, as the great waste of waters, bounded only by distant horizons ever receding as the great ship ploughed onward, impressed its vastness on him.

He was sent aloft the second time on a night watch. It was on a night whose blackness no star pierced and no friendly ray from the convoyed ships or the watchdogs guarding them illumined. No wonder that great fear of he knew not what, and great loneliness, overwhelmed the soul of the land-bred boy! The hours of the watch were interminable: they had forgotten him, alone on that

dizzy, swaying pinnacle, and there he must stay for an eternity of time. With straining eyes he tried to pierce the midnight gloom of rushing air and roaring waters, feeling that the safety of the great ship, with its teeming thousands, rested on him alone, and conscious that he himself was but a helpless atom in that vast world of wind and water through which they were driving onward.

Many thoughts came to him in that lonely hour. Would he ever see again that dear land, lying so safe and happy far behind him, whose shores were bathed in eternal sunshine, and where, almost alone in the world, peace and plenty reigned?

A land that held all that was dear to him, he said to himself, and then quickly and indignantly denied it. On this very ship were two he loved with a boy's capacity for hero-worship, his captain and his lieutenant. And the ship was bearing him, as fast as wave and steam could drive it, to the land that held the person he had long since confessed to himself was dearer than all the world besides.

At the thought of Helen mad visions whirled through his brain. He would do such deeds of daring that the world should ring with his name, and honor and promotion would quickly follow. There was no limit to his vaulting ambition. It was as a general that he would lay his honors and his heart at Helen's feet when the war was over, and in such fantastic dreams, though never for a moment relaxing his vigilance, the leaden hours began to fly on winged feet and he was almost sorry when the watch came to relieve him.

Other and more serious thoughts had come to Reddy

on that midnight watch, thoughts that had never troubled his happy, care-free soul before. What did it all mean? —the whole world at war, humanity crushed under mountains of woe, millions drowned in seas of blood and anguish? Could any good come out of such horrors? Was there a God who ruled the world and cared for His creatures?

That last question he was to answer for himself almost six months later, waiting in the cold and early dawn to give the signal to his men to go over the top; for Reddy was a sergeant now.

It was a long trip over, the great ship zigzagging and seeking to avoid the familiar ocean lanes where submarines might be expected. There was plenty of amusement for the men, some of it rude horse-play, some of it of a quieter kind—minstrel shows, amateur plays, concerts and even movies—and in concert and play Reddy had always a star part assigned him. But though everything was done to relieve the tedium of a long voyage, there was not a man who did not receive with delight the announcement that the next day would probably see them landing in France. And no man, unless it was Lieutenant Jarvis, heard that announcement with a keener thrill of joy than Reddy. He had no reason to believe that France would bring him a sight of Helen, but he hoped it would and reveled in the hope.

The voyage had been rather a stormy one, but that last night the fogs came down, and Reddy, who had the forward watch, could not see so much as a hand before his face. They were in the danger zone now; they could fancy the hideous sea-monsters threading the black waters beneath and around them, and every nerve was on

stretched tension to catch some sign of them. At the close of his watch Lieutenant Jarvis came up with the relief and greeted Reddy.

"Are you tired, Sergeant?" he asked.

"Not a bit, sir," said Reddy, saluting in the dark.

"Come on, then, and walk a bit. I 'm too excited to sleep."

"Is it at the thought of landing to-morrow, sir?" For Reddy's every pulse was jumping at the thought.

"Yes, partly, I suppose. But partly because I 'm always more or less nervous in a fog, and this time it 's a little more, I believe."

"Is it submarines, sir?" asked Reddy, whose sea experiences had been too limited to teach him the danger of fogs.

"No, I suppose the fogs are rather a protection from them."

They stood for a moment by the rail, trying to pierce the murk of mist that swathed them as in a blanket of soft wool.

"Do you know how many ships there are in our convoy, Reddy?" Ted asked.

"Eight or ten, I think, sir."

"And do you know how many destroyers are convoying us?"

"I don't know, sir. But was n't it the grand sight, when we first caught a glimpse of them?—just little puffs of smoke in the distance, and the watch shouting out the news, and the destroyers racing in, and coming close, and herding us on both sides and fore and aft like a flock of sheep, and us boys lined up on deck an' givin' them the glad shout of welcome, an' our big warships,

that had brought us safely over so far, wheelin' an' racin' back toward God's Country, without a word of good-by, as if they were glad to get rid of us, an' showin' us such a clean pair o' heels it made you fair homesick to look at 'em! Oh, it was wonderful!"

Reddy was so glowing in his recital, he had no time for final consonants, and Ted caught a little of his ardor.

"It was wonderful," he agreed; "but what I 'm thinking now is that all those great ships and those harum-scarum little destroyers are ploughing through this pitch blackness, before and beside and behind us, and what is to hinder one of them from bumping into us and sending us to the bottom quicker than a Hun torpedo could? You see, each ship is keeping an exact distance behind the one in front of it. Suppose something happens to delay the forward ship, engine trouble or something; there 's no chance in the world for her."

"I had n't thought of it, sir," said Reddy respectfully, but wondering if there could possibly be a yellow streak in this hero-idol of his. Fear! Reddy did n't know the name, when it came to any tangible thing.

Ted caught this undertone of suspicion in Reddy's voice and he laughed. "You 're thinking I 'm an awful coward, I believe, Sergeant. Perhaps I am, but it 's not fear of death that 's making me one. It 's fear of not getting to France and having my chance at the Huns after all these months of training. I could die happy on the battle-field, but I want my chance first."

"I knew it, sir!" Reddy exclaimed joyfully, and tremendously relieved. "I knew you *could n't* be a coward!"

"There 's another reason, Pierre," Ted hesitated,

greatly embarrassed, but determined that the hour had come when he must make this revelation to Reddy. "You know Miss Seymour of Sunshine House?"

"Yes, sir," said Reddy slowly, wondering, and trembling with a sudden and great fear.

"I have heard her speak of you often; she is very fond of you, I think."

That was very little comfort to Reddy at this moment, but he managed to murmur, "Thank you, sir."

"And I thought," Ted went on, hurrying a little, as he recognized the pain in Reddy's voice, "you would be interested to know that she 's a friend of mine, also. We've been great pals since childhood."

Ted stopped short. Reddy's attitude was unresponsive and there seemed nothing further to say. Reddy waited a moment and then he asked, hesitatingly:

"And was that the other reason, sir?"

"The other reason?" Ted was mystified, he did not understand.

"Yes, sir—why you did n't want to drown before you reached France."

Ted laughed, a little shamefacedly.

"Yes, I suppose it was," he admitted. "I 'm hoping to meet her over there, though I may have to get a bullet in me to manage it. I suppose you would be glad to see her, too?"

Reddy's answer was unintelligible, and very soon they moved on in their walk, Ted trying his best to interest Reddy in a perfect kaleidoscopic group of topics. But he could draw nothing but monosyllables from the young sergeant, and he gave it up after a while and said

good-night out of pure commiseration for Reddy, who could not very well be the first to say it.

Reddy paced the deck a long hour after Ted left him, and he paced it in bitterness of spirit.

So this was that friend he had seen hold Miss Seymour's hand and raise it to his lips at the door of Sunshine House! And she had never told him she knew Lieutenant Jarvis, when he had written her about him! And the lieutenant did n't want to die until he had seen Miss Seymour in France! Very likely they were engaged. Very surely, at least, Lieutenant Jarvis was in love with Miss Seymour and there was no chance for a poor Irish lad.

And for the moment his Celtic soul seethed with wild rage and hatred of the man he had so loved.

CHAPTER XVIII

AT THE BASE HOSPITAL

THERE were many heroes in France not fighting in the front lines and among them none are more to be honored than the nurses of the A.R.C.—frail little women many of them, coming from sheltered homes, and not a few of them the spoiled darlings of wealth and luxury. One who did not know could not believe through what grueling fatigue and horrors they passed, and yet lived to tell the tale. More than that, they loved their work, and nothing but the direst necessity could have compelled them to return home.

Helen's life at Sunshine House had been somewhat of a training for this kind of work, and she was not one of the frail ones. She was abounding in health and spirits, and yet there were many days when by the time her work was over she was too utterly worn out to do more than drop upon her little cot and either toss in feverish dreams of the sights she had been living through, or sink into a slumber of exhaustion so profound as to be deathlike in its semblance.

Those were the days when the convoys of wounded came in from the front in endless streams. The home unit had taken over the charge of a British base hospital, and by the time Helen arrived to join it in the early autumn of 1917 the British were making that great Cambrain drive which for a while promised so much but

which left so many thousands on the field and sent thousands of maimed, gassed, shattered remnants of humanity back to the base hospitals.

Helen had come over as nurse's aid, but arriving in the very midst of the drive, with convoys of hundreds coming in every night, and the nurses working at fever heat long hours over-time and yet not able to do all that must be done, she was impressed at once into the work of the regular nurse. She was quite equal to it; intelligence and strength of will often do more than years of training, and her course as nurse's aid had given her all the necessary elementary instruction which needed only experience to make her proficient. She was getting the experience here rapidly: a week of such work in the base hospital gave her more experience than she could have found in a year of ordinary hospital work. Her superintendent—matron, she was called over there—classed her as a fully trained nurse, and no one questioned her as to her diploma.

But the terrible drive was over at last and the horribly wounded no longer came in a rushing river of hundreds every night, but only a steady rivulet from the trenches of gassed and wounded and ill—trench fever, influenza, trench feet. The nurses had a chance for a little rest and recreation which both the matron and Major Mackay, the head of the unit, declared obligatory.

The nurses were nothing loath. There were walks in the crisp autumn weather into the city, where Helen at least always dropped in for a moment at the wonderful cathedral, whose immemorial beauty grew on her at each visit. Sometimes they stopped for tea at a delightful little café, and occasionally a party was made up with

some of the young officers for dinner in town. Regulations were strict: when officers were to be included, either in walking or dining, not less than three nurses must be of the party, and no wine must be taken. Sometimes the officers, who were British and had no such stern regulations as the Americans, urged the wine on the nurses. "Your matron will never know," they said, but there never was a woman so disloyal to either matron or principle as to yield; and the officers poured out glasses of water for them, with wry faces but also with a real respect and admiration for the inflexible little nurses.

Sometimes the recreation took the form of inviting some of the officers to tea in their mess-hall, which they had managed to adorn with many little feminine touches, until it had taken on a fairly homelike semblance. And one day Miss Stanley, the matron, invited Helen to tea in her own little sitting-room.

"I am inviting Major McClean," she said, " to meet Major Mackay. Major McClean's unit is quite near ours, but in the terrible rush he has not been able to leave his hospital for a minute. He says he knows you and would like to meet you."

"I know him slightly," said Helen steadily, but painfully aware of a rising color. "We came over on the *Aventura* together."

Miss Stanley's smile seemed to make insinuations that Helen would have hotly denied had they been made in words.

"Those crossings are dangerous things," she said significantly. "Major Mackay asked me to invite Major McClean; he wanted to meet him; but I rather wondered

at the alacrity with which Major McClean accepted, for his matron told me he never went to teas."

"Of course he 'd come to meet Major Mackay," said Helen. "No one could refuse such a bait; he 's the dearest man! And I think you 'll like Major McClean," she added casually. "I found him very nice on the boat."

It was a jolly little tea the four had in Miss Stanley's sitting-room, the tiny coal stove diffusing a genial warmth very pleasant indeed with a cold November rain beating against the glass and a wintry wind howling around the frail wooden walls of the shack. Cheese sandwiches and hot toast made on the little stove by Helen and buttered with real butter, added to the steaming cups of tea poured by Miss Stanley and sweetened with domino sugar, brought over by Helen and reserved for such special occasions, made a real feast.

There was plenty of jolly talk; both doctors and nurses knew how to relax and forget for a time the horrors amid which they lived. And when the men had disposed of what seemed to Helen enormous piles of sandwiches and hot buttered toast, and had drunk countless cups of tea, and smoked innumerable cigarettes, they proposed a walk in the rain.

"I 'll have no appetite for dinner," said Major McClean, who made the proposal, "unless I get a constitutional. I 'm ashamed of being such a gourmand, but nothing has tasted quite as good to me since I came to France as that hot toast and those sandwiches."

The two girls—for the matron was only a girl, not many years older than Helen—were willing; rain and wind had no terrors for them. With raincoats and rub-

ber hats and the thick-soled clumsy shoes they had bought in France, impervious to dampness, they were ready to defy wind and weather. A brisk four-mile walk down a woodland road and back was nothing to either of them, accustomed to being on their feet for twelve hours of the day.

The woodland road would be lovely in spring and was lovely in November, Helen thought, crossed at intervals by a clear little stream running full from late fall rains, and arched by trees whose bare gray limbs made delicate traceries against the gray November sky, like the groined Gothic arches in the gray stone of the great cathedral.

The rushing wind and driving rain brought flaming color into the cheeks of the two girls and set tendrils of red-gold hair curling around Helen's face. Major McClean glanced at her often, and observed with what ease and grace she breasted the strong wind and noted the flaming cheeks and glowing gray eyes. He thought, as he had thought on shipboard, that here was a woman after his own heart—strong of body, beautiful of face, of keen intelligence, charming manner, and tender soul. This last he had to guess at, perhaps, but he was sure he was right. No woman could speak of her wounded boys as she spoke of hers, without sentimentality but with the truest sympathy, and not be the soul of tenderness.

He managed to say to her only one word of any significance, and that was interrupted before Helen had any chance to make a response to it. She was glad, since she did not know what response to make.

"Miss Seymour," he said, as they rounded a curve in the road and were, for a moment, out of sight of the

other two, "I have many regrets to charge to the account of that false submarine scare on board the *Aventura.*"

"Why!" and Helen opened her eyes wide in feigned surprise. "I thought it rather frightful at the time, but I think it delightful in retrospect."

"To me it was a very unkind interruption. I had meant to say something to you that I wanted very much to say, and you gave me no chance later. Will you give me that chance some day?"

"Oh, please don't say it!" was on the tip of Helen's tongue, but before the words could be uttered a motor-car stopped beside them with a clatter of brakes and a rather loud-voiced invitation from the army colonel in charge of the hospital sector to jump in and let him give them a lift home. Major McClean would have liked to decline, with the excuse that he had come out for a walk; but the others, coming up at that moment, accepted with glee, and he was helpless.

In Miss Stanley's little sitting-room, hovering over the tiny stove to warm stiff hands and numb feet, the major made his adieus.

"I hope you 'll invite me again, Miss Stanley," he said. "I 've enjoyed my afternoon immensely."

"Indeed I will!" said Miss Stanley, cordially, but thinking that she had added little to the pleasure of the afternoon for him; "but you must not wait for an invitation; you must come over whenever you can. There will always be a cup of tea ready for you."

And then, a little awkwardly, Helen thought, the major invited them over to take tea at his unit the next Wednesday; Major Mackay would drive them over in his car.

Miss Stanley declared she would be delighted, and Helen said she would like very much to meet some of the nurses she had known on the *Aventura;* whereat the major looked a little crestfallen. No doubt he had not intended inviting any of the nurses of his own unit; very likely he wanted to keep it a party *carré.*

"Look here, little Miss Helen," said Miss Stanley, good-naturedly, when both majors had whirled away in the dark in Major McClean's car, "why have you never told me, you demure little thing, that you have the great and only Dr. McClean on a string?"

"I have n't any one on a string," said Helen indifferently.

"You don't mean to say you are trifling with him!"

"No more than he is trifling with me."

"Oh, it 's perfectly evident he 's tremendously in earnest," persisted Miss Stanley.

"Not at all!" said Helen, growing irritated at last. "And I don't believe I 'll go to his old tea next week."

Whereupon Miss Stanley concluded it was time to change the subject.

Major McClean's unit was located only twenty-five miles away and Helen saw him several times in the next two months, but always with others present. And she manœuvered so skilfully not to see him alone that the major never discovered he was being outgeneraled. After that first visit of his, Helen had lain awake a long hour, thinking of him, liking him, admiring him, wondering whether or not she should let him tell her what he had asked permission to tell her some day. But persistently, as she would just about decide to hear what he had to say, Ted's face—boyish, frank, careless, not

half so distinguished of feature as the rather pale, high-bred face of Major McClean—would flash before her vision with such pathos in the merry brown eyes that she knew this paragon of physicians, this man of lofty ideals and noble aims, was not for her. Ted might never want her; she was more than half convinced now that he never would; but until she was sure she would think of no one else. And when at last she had come to this decision never to give Major McClean that chance he had asked for, she fell at once into sweet and restful and dreamless sleep.

At the end of the two months Major McClean's unit was ordered south to the American sector. He made a hurried farewell call, but Helen happened to be in town and missed him, and by the time his unit was fully settled in its new quarters, and he might with a good conscience think of taking a few days off to pay a flying visit to Helen's unit, the great German drive of March had begun. Major McClean's unit was in the quiet American sector and, for a time, not greatly affected by the drive; but Helen's was almost in the path of the first great onward sweep toward the Channel ports. There was no possibility of reaching her from the south, even if he could have obtained a permit, with the hordes of fleeing refugees and retreating armies blocking all the roads.

Those were awful days for every hospital, and nurses went through such terrible strains of superhuman work and mortal agony as will leave their mark for life on many of them. Some of the nurses were taking the gas-training, to go down to the front lines to the casualty clearing stations—the C. C. S. they called them—and

Helen begged to be allowed to take it also. Fearful as were the reports brought back by the nurses returning from the C. C. S., Helen was not to be deterred, for she felt that there she could be serving her country in the very highest capacity. But her matron was inexorable. Helen was the youngest nurse in the unit and, though she must pass through many terrible experiences, this horror should be spared her.

But there were horrors enough through those beautiful spring days while the Germans were making their terrible drives. The nurses were almost at the limit of their endurance; they could hardly have held out much longer, when there came one of those lulls between drives, necessary for the re-formation of divisions and the bringing up of supplies. It gave both soldiers and nurses a breathing-spell, and it was in the midst of this comparative quiet, a beautiful afternoon in May, that Helen was summoned to the mess-hall, which was also the nurses' sitting-room, to see Ted. His regiment had been taking intensive training with the British not very far away. They had spent some time in the trenches, but had been in no actual fighting; and in this interval between drives he had secured permission to make the visit.

Helen's pale cheeks and sunken eyes appalled him. "She is killing herself," he thought; "she never ought to have gone into it." But aloud he said: "Get on your things. I 'm going to take you for a drive and take you into the city for dinner."

"If only I can go! And I believe I can!" Helen exclaimed delightedly. "We heard, just a little while ago, that there would be no convoys in to-night and most

of those we have are doing well. I 'll ask Miss Stanley."

"Send Miss Stanley to me if she objects, and I 'll have a little private talk with her," Ted called after Helen as she was hurrying away to Miss Stanley's office.

But Miss Stanley was glad to have one of her worn-out nurses get away for a while, and when Helen told her Lieutenant Jarvis was an old friend from home the stringent rule against driving or dining alone with an officer was relaxed.

And what a luxury it was to tired feet and aching back to be rolling smoothly along through the sweet spring air, over the same woodland road where she had walked with Major McClean last November! No spring had ever been so fresh and beautiful as that spring of 1918 —the trees in heavy foliage, flowers springing everywhere, flashing wings among the green leaves, and exquisite strains of bird melody flooding the air! It was in vivid contrast to that November walk and to the cold and dreary winter just left behind.

Helen had been suffering an unusual attack of depression, for which there was no greater foundation, she assured herself, than being overtired; and yet she had not been able to throw it off until Ted's visit sent it flying. It was good to be alive in this lovely spring air, and rolling through it so comfortably with her childhood friend beside her. For a while she made no effort to talk — just listened to Ted's gay chatter, which might have sounded foolish to her, in comparison with Major McClean's sensible and rather stately utterances, if she had stopped to compare it. But she made no comparisons; she did not think about it at all; she only felt, "How restful Ted is!"

On the edge of the forest they discovered a rustic café, where they stopped for afternoon tea and sat out under the trees and ate fragrant strawberries, served with thick Normandy cream, and fresh brioches, warm from the oven, and drank a cup of delicious coffee.

"I 've drunk so much tea, since I 've been in a British hospital, I think I 'll never taste it again after I get home," Helen declared.

"And I 've been getting tea for *breakfast* in my English camp, and you know what an abomination that is to a good American! This coffee is fit for kings, or, as Irvin Cobb would say, 'Entirely too good for some kings I know.' " At which they both laughed inanely, just because they were foolishly happy.

The sun was near its setting as they drew up in front of the cathedral, its level rays pouring through the rich stained-glass and flooding the interior with glory. This was Ted's first visit to it and for a while its beauty quite overwhelmed him and kept him silent.

"Why can we never have anything like this in America?" he said at last, with a sigh.

"Because stained-glass like this is a lost art, for one thing; and time and labor were never taken into account when this was built. If it took several hundred men a century or so to build a cathedral like this, why, that was all right. But our rushing age can never do anything very artistic, if it requires time."

"No, I suppose not. How dreadful it would be if the Germans should get this, as they have Rheims and Arras."

"God forbid!" Helen ejaculated fervently. And suddenly all her depression returned to her.

"What do you think it means, Ted? Will the Germans get to Paris? And will they take the Channel ports? If they do, that 's the end."

"No, it 's not the end, even if they take them; but *they never will,*" Ted asserted firmly.

"What makes you so sure?"

"Everything. The Americans have n't come in yet, for one thing. And now that all the armies are under one leader you 'll see results. General Hatfield says—By the way, you knew Hatfield when he was in America buying horses. I remember you girls were all crazy about him, with his empty sleeve and handsome face."

"Do you mean Colonel Hatfield? Of course I remember him. You 're quite right we were all crazy about him. I 've never seen a finer figure of a man."

"Well, he 's a general now, and in command of the camp where our regiment is stationed. What was it I started to say about him?"

"You were going to tell me what he says about this drive."

"Oh, yes! He thinks it 's Foch's orders, this constant retreating; that he 's laying for a second battle of the Marne."

"I don't believe it. The British are losing too many men and guns. Oh, Ted, it would break your heart to see the convoys of horribly wounded men coming in every night when a drive 's on—hundreds of them; one night a thousand!"

"Look here, Helen, I think you 've had enough of this; you 're getting stale. I think I 'll see your matron and get her to give you a furlough. You 've been over here a year, have n't you?"

"Impossible! Nothing could induce me to ask for leave while this drive 's on. We 're terribly short-handed. And now that you and Reddy are here and I can see you occasionally, I 'll be all right. I feel ten years younger this minute than I did before you came."

"We 're to be moved south next week," said Ted, gloomily.

"Oh! I 'm sorry!"

"And that reminds me. Don't let Reddy know I 've seen you. I tried to get permission to bring him over with me, without saying anything about it to him, but I could n't. He 's so absurdly jealous it would make him terribly unhappy, or mad, or both, if he knew I 'd seen you and he had n't. He 's hardly on speaking-terms with me now, as it is."

"I hope you make plenty of allowance for Reddy, Ted. You know I 'm the very first woman he knew of his kind —or, rather, of the kind his father 's son ought to know."

"Oh, I make allowance all right, but he 's an absurd kid."

"Yes, I think he is," said Helen slowly, "but he 's a lovable one, too." And in spite of himself Ted felt a keen twinge of jealousy at her words. "I 'm as absurd as Reddy," he said to himself impatiently, and promptly rose to his feet.

"Dinner time," he said laconically. "Come on."

Seated at a table in the little café, disposing of a dinner in whose selection Ted had proved himself a past master in the fine art of dining, enjoying the delicious viands and fine linen and china, in delightful contrast to bully beef and unpalatable war bread served in heavy earthenware on oilcloth-covered tables, Ted saw a dis-

tinguished-looking officer enter the café. As the newcomer's eyes fell on Helen, Ted saw them brighten wonderfully.

"Another victim," thought Ted, rather bitterly, as the officer hastened toward Helen. "No doubt there are oodles of them."

Helen introduced him as Major McClean, in charge of an American base hospital in the Vosges.

"But how did you get here?" she asked.

"It 's quiet down our way, and I took advantage of this lull, just now, to come up and call on my old friends. —How are Major Mackay and Miss Stanley?"

But Ted was not deceived, as he evidently was intended to be; he was very sure the major had come to see Helen only. And, since he had come so far, Ted felt in duty bound to invite him to join them at dinner.

But this, much to Ted's relief, the major declined. With a last word to Helen that he would be out the next day to see his old friends at the hospital, and to tell Miss Stanley he would expect her to give him a cup of tea, he went off to a table sufficiently remote but commanding a perfect view of Ted's back and Helen's face. He intended—unobtrusively, of course—to watch Helen and determine from her expression in what relation she stood to this handsome young fellow with whom she was dining alone.

Helen could not be entirely unconscious of this scrutiny, though it was so scrupulously veiled, and she was not sorry to have their dinner cut a little short—Ted must be back in camp by midnight. Their drive home was a quiet one and their talk a little tinged by sadness. Helen could not forget that before she saw Ted again

he would almost surely have been in action, and she knew too well what awful things came back from those front lines, or did not come back. And, no doubt, Ted could not forget, either.

His last words to her showed her a new Ted, a Ted she had never known, and left her wondering and a little awe-struck at this new vision of him:

"I don't want you to feel discouraged or unhappy, Helen. It will all come right. I *know* the right will prevail. As long as the world stands, Right will always be stronger than Might. I have great faith in Foch and Pershing and Haig, and great faith in our boys, but I have greater faith in God. And God 's still 'in His heaven. *All 's right with the world.*' "

CHAPTER XIX

TED AND REDDY SHAKE HANDS

REDDY'S rage had gradually cooled off, but it had left in its place a terrible emptiness in his heart where he had once enshrined Lieutenant Jarvis.

Ted felt the coldness keenly, for he had taken a strong liking to Reddy, but also it irritated him. It seemed to him great presumption on the part of this Irish lad to resent his friendship with Helen. However, he recognized that Reddy was hardly responsible: it was his Celtic vanity that had betrayed him into the presumption and the Irish chip he carried on his shoulder that made him resent so keenly the claims of another. Ted was sorry for him and determined to ignore the estrangement that Reddy made so extremely palpable.

The regiment had two days in Paris, wonderful days to all of them, but to none quite so wonderful as to Reddy. His awakened intelligence was eager to take in everything new, and especially everything that he had begun to perceive he ought to know and be familiar with, as were Lieutenant Jarvis and the class to which he belonged.

Ted, bearing in mind what he thought would please Helen, invited Reddy on their first day in Paris to go with him to the Louvre. He clinched his invitation with, "I think Miss Seymour would like to have you see some of the paintings there."

Reddy stiffened at the sound of Helen's name and was more than half inclined to refuse Ted's chaperonage, had he dared. Yet, inconsistently, he was eager, also, to avail himself of it, since he knew enough to know that the pictures would probably mean little to him without some intelligent interpreter at his ear.

Ted spent an hour or two with him in the Louvre, principally in the Salon Carré and the Venus de Milo Hall of Sculpture, giving brief lectures on such notable pictures as "L'Inconnue" and "L'Assomption" and "The Temptation" and showing Reddy how to appreciate the beauty of line and the majesty of mien in the Venus de Milo and the Samothrace Victory.

Reddy listened intently, but if it had not been for his glowing eyes and heightened color, neither of which he could quite control, Ted might have thought him totally indifferent, for he could elicit only the briefest of questions on some unelucidated point or a monosyllabic reply to his own questions.

The next day he conducted a half-dozen of Reddy's "Crusaders" to Versailles and Saint Cloud, and while the rest of the party were eagerly responsive to all he showed them and told them, Reddy still maintained his air of stolid indifference. It rather exasperated Ted and he concluded to let him alone for a while.

Next morning a long train of box-cars, bearing the inscription the men were soon to grow so familiar with —*"8 chevaux ou 40 hommes"*—bore them eastward toward the British sector. The forty *hommes* were packed in close, and it was a tedious journey of two days and nights, but Reddy's spirits were steadily rising with every mile that separated him from Paris and brought

him, he hoped, nearer Helen; and Sergeant Paschal and his "Crusaders" kept the car ringing with song and laughter. At every little village where they stopped, often for no reason Reddy could possibly imagine, the villagers crowded around the train and chattered to the men in French and were answered, perfectly irrelevantly of course, in good American, with *"Vive la France!"* thrown in every other sentence for good measure. Reddy had been studying French almost from the moment he went to Fort Barry, but his text-book had been a little conversation-book and these French men and French girls, very unkindly, used none of the phrases in his book, or at least none that he could recognize. He tried a few on them, but their puzzled looks and polite *"Pardon, Monsieur,"* decided him that either his phrase-book was no good or these people were not French.

There came a time when it dawned on him that it might have been his pronunciation that was at fault, but that came later, and by that time Reddy was really making some progress in the language by the aid of a French-English grammar and a French-English dictionary and a relentless ambition. On the occasion of his visit to the Louvre and his trip to Versailles he had heard, with something like awe, Lieutenant Jarvis speaking with ease to the attendants, and apparently perfectly comprehended by them. From that moment he determined to become a French scholar. No doubt Miss Seymour and all her friends spoke French as fluently as Lieutenant Jarvis. Reddy would also speak it with ease, since it seemed to be an accomplishment common in that class to which he had secretly determined some day to attain.

Reddy had not written to Helen; or, rather, he had sent her no letter. He had written her one on the boat, adding to it daily and intending to close it up on that last night on board and mail it immediately on landing. Instead, after that talk with Lieutenant Jarvis, he had torn his letter to shreds and scattered it to the waves. He hardly knew why he had done so; certainly he was not angry with Helen, but a sort of fierce pride, a wounded self-esteem, made him feel that in no way would he intrude himself upon her.

Ted, too, had written Helen on the boat and that last night he had added a paragraph. "I 'm afraid," he wrote, "I 've made a mistake with your friend Reddy. I had come to like him extremely and I think he liked me, but not now. I felt it was time to tell him that I knew you and had heard you speak of him, and I thought it would please the boy. But there 's never any knowing what will please an Irishman or what will make him fighting mad. Reddy would give his eyes just now to take a shillalah to me, and all because I said you were an old friend of mine. The presumption of the boy! Of course I pretend not to notice our changed relations, but they 're there. And I 'm sorry; I liked him so much."

Helen received Ted's letter with the keenest delight. She had not known that the regiment was on its way to France and to get a letter from him mailed in Paris seemed almost like seeing him. But she was acutely sorry when she came to the account of Reddy—she knew the boy's capacity for suffering. She saw now that she had made a great mistake in concealing from him her acquaintance with Lieutenant Jarvis. What reason she

was going to give him for this very unnatural procedure she could not see, and she racked her brains to invent one. But she wrote him a charming letter, telling him with what delight she had learned from the papers—she had actually seen it there—the arrival of his regiment, and begging him to send her his address as soon as he had one. If ever she got a chance, she promised, she would certainly make the regiment a visit. She gave him, also, the location of her hospital and begged him, if he should get an "A. W. L.," to come up to see her at work.

For half an hour after the receipt of this letter, in a British camp where they were undergoing some exceedingly intensive training, Reddy was a proud and happy boy. But very inopportunely, at the end of the half-hour, Lieutenant Jarvis passed by and bestowed upon him a friendly smile in returning his salute. Reddy very nearly returned the smile with a scowl. He understood that smile: Lieutenant Jarvis was happy, too. He, also, had a letter in his pocket; and no doubt, Reddy said to himself with a sneer, the lieutenant's letter was very different from his.

It was two months later that the ——th Regiment found itself in a little village in a very beautiful part of France, far from their first encampment. For two months they had been undergoing an intensive training that included four days in the trenches at two different times and twice they had made forced retreats with the British, for it was the great German Peace Offensive driving them steadily back toward Paris and the Channel ports. Now they were sent into billets for a comparative rest in that peaceful sector, quiet since the first great German rush toward Paris in 1914.

Sergeant Paschal had been very lucky in his assignment, he told himself. It was a typical French farmhouse with a stable built on at one end, where cows and pigs and chickens and rabbits and one old horse lived on friendliest terms with the family. The farm, of course, was some distance in the country, and very early in the morning, before even Reddy and his men were up, the old grandfather and the two girls, seventeen and nineteen, had harnessed the ancient horse—a Percheron, and stalwart in his day—to a cart with wooden wheels, and were off to the farm. The mother stayed at home to take care of the house and look after the cows, the chickens, the pigs, and the rabbits, and work the garden. But the family all gathered at home for the evening meal, which the young sergeant with the pleasant manners was often invited to share. Sometimes he was invited to bring one of his men with him and he scrupulously took the men in turn in delivering these invitations. The mother was a fine cook, as are most French women, and the little garden furnished fresh vegetables and berries and fruit, the cows furnished rich cream for coffee, and for meat there were chickens and rabbits and eggs—a menu fit for a king. No wonder the men eagerly looked forward to an occasional invitation to supper and envied Reddy the frequency of his!

But whether invited to supper or not, Reddy usually found himself at the family fireside in the evenings, diligently pursuing his study of French with one or other of the two girls as teacher. He had discovered now what was the matter with his French, and with his quick ear for music he was rapidly mastering the difficulties of a pronunciation much more easily mastered by an Irish-

American than by a German-American. The girls were both attractive in their way, a fresh, simple country-bred way, with pleasant manners always unconsciously verging on coquetry; and it was his evenings spent at the fireside in such company that the men envied even more than the delicious suppers.

Reddy began by having both of the girls as instructors, but by imperceptible degrees the elder took his education entirely into her own hands. She was the prettier and the brighter of the two, therefore Reddy was not sorry for the arrangement, and he was on his mettle to show his pretty young teacher that he was not stupid. He was keen on study for its own sake—he loved it—he was eager to master the tongue and surprise Lieutenant Jarvis and Miss Seymour by his proficiency and the society of pretty girls would always be an inspiration to Reddy. He began to look forward to his evenings with delightful anticipations and the ache of his estrangement from his lieutenant and his mortification about Miss Seymour began to grow duller.

In those months on the British sector he had seen as little of Lieutenant Jarvis as possible. Ted, while not trying to avoid Reddy, had let him go his own way, trusting to time to heal the wound his self-complacency had received. That was what Ted called it to himself: he was unwilling to admit that it was much more than a sharp prick to Reddy's vanity.

One day on the British sector Reddy had seen Lieutenant Jarvis talking with a distinguished-looking young British general and apparently on the friendliest terms with him. A Tommy standing near had volunteered the information that the officer was General Hatfield, one

of the bravest soldiers in the British Army, and gave Reddy a much garnished account of the wonderful exploits of the young officer—of his being wounded and captured in the great battle of the Aisne and the Marne; of his loss of an arm in a German hospital; of the wonderful escape he made afterward, carrying a wounded friend most of the way on his back; of his going to the bottom in the *Lusitania* and coming up alive, with two rescued babies in his arm. There was much more of this garbled account, that had somehow seeped through piecemeal to the Tommies in the ranks, and he wound up with, "'Han' 'e went hin has ha ranker, wat!"

Reddy was thrilled to his toes. If General Hatfield had begun as a private, why should not Reddy end as a general?

And then Tommy dazzled Reddy a little more.

"A course yeh know 'e 's ha toff, ha viscount, han' 'e 'll be han earl some day. But 'e won the V. C., hall right; han' they say King Halbert 'imself pinned a big medal on 'is chist."

Reddy immediately visioned himself appearing before Helen at the end of the war with a row of medals and ribbons strung across his breast and in a colonel's uniform at least, perhaps a general's, while Lieutenant Jarvis should be a lieutenant still, and medalless.

But at that, such sharp compunction seized Reddy that he should have harbored such thoughts of the man he had once loved—and that perhaps Miss Seymour loved—that it was like a sword through his heart. And at that moment Ted came up with this fairy-tale hero and stopped in front of Reddy.

"I want to introduce my friend Sergeant Paschal,

General Hatfield," said Ted. And Reddy, nearly paralyzed, found himself shaking hands with this hero of many adventures and a viscount to boot.

He never could have gone through with the ordeal but that he was determined to acquit himself creditably in the eyes of Lieutenant Jarvis. His innate good breeding taught him that he must bear himself modestly and let the British officer take the initiative, and for fully two minutes he found himself conversing with apparent ease with the great man and the focus of many admiring but furtive glances from his awe-struck Tommy-friends.

Ted was very much pleased with the manner in which Reddy bore himself and would have liked to tell him so, but he was not at all certain how Reddy would take it. Very likely his sensitive Irish vanity would resent the implication that he could have borne himself in any other fashion.

Reddy had thawed a little toward his lieutenant after this presentation to General Hatfield. He thought it "white all through" of Lieutenant Jarvis to call him his friend in presenting him to an incipient earl. He showed his appreciation by a little more of his old friendliness, which gave Ted a keener thrill of pleasure than he thought the occasion warranted, and for which he rather took himself to task.

This was three weeks before that July evening when Reddy, seated as usual by Mademoiselle Marie and making her pretty speeches in labored French—speeches that in no way involved any disloyalty to Helen—was startled by the sudden appearance of Lieutenant Jarvis at the door.

He came in, hat in hand, and apologizing in easy

French for disturbing a family party. He had come to see Sergeant Paschal on a matter of rather important business. He would wait for the sergeant to get his hat and overcoat, as he wanted to take him out for a walk and the evening was cool, and they might be out late.

Reddy returned in hot haste from his room, overcoat on, cap in hand, to find the handsome lieutenant making pretty speeches to Mademoiselle Marie, not in labored French but in a French as easy, if not quite so musical, as Mademoiselle Marie's own, and which she was receiving with many more smiles and blushes and dimples than she had ever bestowed upon him.

Reddy made his adieus to the family in as courtly fashion as his lieutenant and in unconscious imitation of him, but for nearly half of their long walk and talk, lasting well over an hour, all his old rage against Ted was in full force. It was not enough that the fellow should take Miss Seymour from him; he was going to destroy what comfort Reddy had been able to glean from his poor little friendship with Mademoiselle Marie. For he did not doubt that Lieutenant Jarvis, having once basked in her bewitching smiles, would seek to bask in them often; and he was sufficiently modest to believe that he stood no chance in competition with his lieutenant's handsome face and facile French and courtly manners, reinforced by a silver bar on the shoulder.

For the first half of the walk, therefore, while listening intently to his lieutenant's instructions concerning the preparations for an early entrainment, he received them with a deadly coldness of manner that barely escaped insolence, Ted thought. He almost lost patience with Reddy; but for Helen's interest in the boy he be-

lieved he would give him up entirely. He had done nothing to arouse Reddy's resentment; he had never done anything. The fellow was simply impossible!

When he had finished the minute details of his instructions he hesitated a moment. He had intended to entrust Reddy with the reasons for this sudden desertion of billets—was he worthy of his confidence? Then he decided he was, and he began:

"What I am about to say, Sergeant Paschal, is in the strictest confidence. No possible inkling of our movements or intentions must be allowed to seep through to the enemy, and so you will say nothing to your men of the reasons for these sudden orders to entrain. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said Reddy, alert and eager at once, and with no trace of coldness or insolence left in his voice.

"*We are about to take the offensive,*" said Ted impressively.

"Thank God!" ejaculated Reddy, fervently.

"I say so too. And think of it, Paschal, we, the Americans, are to go it on our own, under Pershing as our commander. We are to attack on the St.-Mihiel sector and clear out that pocket from Verdun across to Metz."

"Glory!" breathed Reddy ecstatically.

"There 'll be some hard fighting."

"It 's what we want."

"And it 's a tremendously difficult country, hills and woods and rivers."

"It won't be difficult for the dough-boys," said Reddy confidently.

"And you know we may neither of us come out of it alive?" said Ted tentatively.

"Who cares!" said Reddy defiantly.

Ted laughed.

"Give us your hand, Sergeant Paschal," he said delightedly. "You 're a boy after my own heart!"

And half reluctantly, half joyfully, Reddy returned the firm pressure of his lieutenant's grasp.

CHAPTER XX

THE JUVIGNY PLATEAU

THE attack on St.-Mihiel did not begin as early as Ted had told Reddy to expect it. Nor did they move to the St.-Mihiel sector in the morning. Ted's instructions had been to have his men ready for entrainment in the early dawn, but long before midnight the division, under rush orders, was rolling swiftly in camions toward the French fighting-front moving on La Fère.

It was still night when they entered the trenches, relieving an exhausted French division that had been fighting for four days against a greatly stiffened German opposition. At dawn they were to go over the top, and the division had never been over the top.

There was no thought of sleep with any of the men. Each corporal with his squad was in a dugout, playing cards or craps, smoking, telling stories—anything to relieve the terrible strain of waiting for the signal. Sergeant Paschal moved from dugout to dugout of the various squads for which he was responsible, noting how the men were standing the strain and giving them a word of encouragement if he thought they needed it. This was to be the division's baptism of fire; at Chateau Thierry they had remained on reserve; who knew how these young, untried soldiers would acquit themselves?

In one dugout he found his old squad under their new

corporal, Fritz Swartz, but he did not enter. He was stopped at the door by Fritz's voice, uttering his own name. The men had been playing cards, but the cards were lying idle now, while the squad listened to Fritz.

"I 'm goin' to foller ez clost to Sergeant Paschal ez I kin git," he was saying, "an' you boys foller me. Sergeant Paschal 'll sure lead us inter the thick uv it, an' any man wat wants to kill a Boche or git a prisner, jest foller the sergeant."

Reddy did not stop to listen further. For the first time he felt a real liking for Fritz, and appreciated the depth and genuineness of the boy's devotion to him; but for the first time, also, he realized to the full his own responsibilities. These men were relying on him as a leader, thinking of him as brave and adventurous. What if he should fail them? What if that horrible shrinking and trembling that had been coming upon him at intervals through the long hours of waiting should overwhelm him at the critical moment, and his shaking limbs refuse even to take him over the top? Reddy was ghastly white and trembling at the thought—afraid, now, not of the Boche guns or the cold steel but of being a coward.

Suddenly there came to him, as there had come to him in the lonely crow's-nest on that midnight watch nearly six months before, the cry of a soul naked before the awful eternities it was facing, demanding comfort and assurance from some power greater than itself, as a child cries to its mother for help in the hour of peril:

"Is there a God who cares for each of His creatures? —for little me, indistinguishable among so many millions?" he asked himself.

Instantly, in reply, came the words that he had heard his chaplain read on the Sunday before. Reddy had hardly been conscious of hearing them then, but now they came to him, distinct and clear, as if a voice were speaking them:

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: Be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Reddy's fear dropped from him and great peace took its place. No, he need not be afraid of proving himself a coward; God Himself had bade him, "Be not dismayed," and had promised to strengthen and help him. He had found that higher power on which to lean and his soul was at rest.

A few minutes later Lieutenant Jarvis came up. Ted was looking after his platoon, getting reports from his sergeants as to the condition of his men, much as Reddy was looking after his corporals and their squads.

"We 've only a half-hour longer," Ted said to him, when he had received Reddy's report. "I 'll be glad when it 's over."

"Have you heard, sir," said Reddy, "that they have four divisions against our one? Are n't you the least bit afraid?"

Reddy spoke curiously, for the lieutenant's eye was so steady and his voice so cheerful and yet so natural, that Reddy marveled a little. He had always unconsciously thought of a "toff," as Reddy regarded Ted, as being endowed with less physical courage than belonged to his own rougher class.

"Afraid?" Ted repeated after him. "Why, yes, I suppose I am. But I keep thinking of the story I heard,

when we were in the British sector, of the battle of Mons. General Hatfield told it to me and it impressed me tremendously. He was in the battle of Mons, himself, the first great battle of the war, when the little army of sixty thousand British were opposed to hundreds of thousands of Germans. From the very start there was no possibility of anything but defeat. He says that three times the Germans smashed the British lines and all but broke through, only to withdraw at the very moment of victory. No one could understand it. General Hatfield says that long after he asked a prisoner, a German officer, to explain why they did not follow up their victory; they would have annihilated the whole British Army. And what do you think the German officer said?—that each time, when they were on the point of breaking through, they caught sight of the British reserves, immense numbers of them, and they did not dare. And you know, Paschal, *there were no British reserves.*

"And Hatfield says," Ted went on, "that every British Tommy firmly believes God opened the eyes of the Germans to see the mighty spiritual hosts that were fighting against them, just as He opened the eyes of Elisha's servant to see the mountains filled with horses and chariots fighting for Elisha. Elisha said to his servant, 'Fear not, for they that are with us are more than they that be with them,' and if I ever feel a little bit afraid I just say those words to myself, and I think of the 'reserves' at Mons."

"It 's wonderful, sir; is n't it!" said Reddy, courage and joy shining in his blue eyes.

Ted looked at his watch and Reddy looked at his.

"Time!" said Ted, and Reddy went to each dugout under his control and called in: "Just a quarter of an hour, men, till we go over. Come out and take your places."

And quietly the men came out into the trenches, fixing bayonets and lining up in silence, though many a man thought his comrades must hear the beating of his heart and call him a coward.

Ten minutes later Sergeant Paschal came along the lines again and spoke to each man, shouting in his ear to be heard above the roar of the guns:

"Five minutes, men. Get on the firing-step, and keep your heads low."

He took his place a little higher up, where the men could see him when he gave the signal. The day was breaking now. He could look over into No Man's Land and beyond, to the German trenches. The great guns behind his own trenches were thundering a mighty barrage, pounding the enemy trenches and breaking up the barbed-wire entanglements. The moment was at hand, but Reddy no longer trembled; he felt only a great exaltation of spirit. At last the hour had come for which he had been training for more than a year, and he welcomed it with quiet confidence.

Then, suddenly, the barrage lifted. There was a moment of utter silence more awful than the thunder and roar of the guns had been. In that silence the signal was given and with a wild yell Reddy and his men went over the top. The rolling barrage moved forward with thunder and roar, but it no longer terrified the men; they welcomed it as their protection.

Once over the top Reddy's mood changed. All the

daredevil spirit of adventure of the old Gang days returned upon him fourfold. He was out to kill, perhaps, but still more was he out to win. He felt himself invincible and believed he bore a charmed life. He knew he should come out of the battle alive and whole and his only care was to bring with him as many prisoners as possible.

Early in the fight he lost sight of his lieutenant, for which he was sorry. He had intended to keep near him. He wanted him to be witness of any deeds of prowess he might perform—Reddy was very sure of the prowess—and among the deeds he visioned was a spectacular saving of his lieutenant's life. But he had only time to see that the lieutenant was himself dashing ahead of his men, into the very thick of the fight, likely to have many deeds of prowess to his own credit. Then the mad excitement of the battle whirled Reddy away from Ted's vicinity.

There followed five days of tremendous, heartbreaking struggle—one raw division of Americans against four veteran German ones. But the Americans were fresh, and full of a gay courage, while the Germans were sick of four long years of war and looked forward with dread to another winter in the trenches. Nevertheless they put up a stubborn fight and they had fortified the high plateau of Juvigny until it was an impregnable fortress, sown thick with machine-gun nests, artfully concealed. The little town of Juvigny itself was of small importance, but this plateau was an objective to be fought for to the bitter end. Once in possession of it, the Americans could dominate the Germans as now the Germans dominated the Americans.

There were attacks and counter attacks. Every trench and machine-gun nest was taken and retaken; shock troops and the famous Prussian Guards were rushed up to meet these green American troops, who did not know enough to know when they were whipped. But shock troops and Prussian Guards gave way steadily before them, and every night saw the Americans occupying some of the German trenches a little farther forward, newly deserted.

It was heartbreaking work, but not to Reddy. Every morning he sallied forth gaily in search of prisoners, and half a dozen times a day he would come back to the lines, marching one, two, or three ahead of him, deliver them over to the guards, and hurry back for more.

And Fritz Swartz was always at his heels. Reddy was beginning to have a tremendous respect for Fritz: he was good fighting material, and it seemed to Reddy that he was inspired with a determination to win laurels for the name of "German-American"; to prove that America had no more loyal or braver sons than many of these sons of the Fatherland were proving themselves to be.

It was on the fifth day of this tremendous struggle, when the plateau which was to give the French and Americans command of the plain to the east was almost cleared, that a machine-gun nest, securely entrenched on a small rocky declivity, was proving itself even a deadlier peril than those deadly nests always are. It was holding back the whole first line and taking toll of scores of brave men. Reddy turned to the faithful Fritz.

"We must take that nest, Fritz," he said.

"Yes, sir," said Fritz, nothing daunted. "But how?"

Fritz had called Reddy "sir" ever since Reddy had worn the sergeant's stripes, and Reddy liked it.

"We 'll slip around behind those trees and bushes and come on them from the rear," said Reddy.

"It 's likely there 's more nests in the bushes," said Fritz, merely as a precautionary suggestion.

"Very likely. But if there are we 'll capture them or put them out of commission."

"Yes, sir," said Fritz. "Go ahead."

And saying nothing to their comrades, the two boys, bent on glory, stooped and crawled, or stood upright when they were sufficiently screened, and, guided by the rat-a-tat-tat of the guns, slipped up in the rear of the nest.

Eight stalwart Germans, each manning a machine gun, were so intent on their deadly work that they did not see the boys slip in behind them until, at the crack of two rifles, two of their number fell and the other six wheeled quickly to look into the barrels of automatic pistols.

In a flash twelve hands were held high, and six harsh German voices shouted, "*Kamerad!*"

"About face!" commanded Reddy, and the six wheeled and started on their march toward the American lines.

It was not far, not more than two or three hundred yards, but their emergence from the bushes concealing the machine-gun nest seemed to be the signal for a fusillade of shrapnel and shell from the German lines. So intent was Reddy on driving his prize before him and seeing that none escaped that he did not see Fritz fall at his side; and the deafening roar of the guns drowned Fritz's cry, "Reddy!"

A few yards farther on, one of his captives fell, struck by shrapnel from his own side. Reddy did not hesitate.

"March on!" he shouted to the other five, stooped and slung the wounded German over his shoulder, and at that moment discovered that Fritz was gone. For the flash of a second he thought he must go back for him and abandon his captives. But it was only an instant's hesitation; his prisoners must be secured, there would be time enough to go back for Fritz later.

It was a proud Reddy that delivered up his six captives, but he did not wait to listen to the congratulations the guards were showering on him. He laid the wounded German gently down, turned, and fairly ran back toward the German lines.

The firing had grown more intense. Shrapnel and shell were shrieking over his head, falling in deadly showers, and bursting with terrific roar around him. Evidently the Germans were laying down a barrage preparatory to a counter attack. Reddy must crawl on hands and knees, or lie flat for a moment's respite in some convenient shell-hole, if he ever hoped to reach Fritz and rescue him. He was retracing, as exactly as possible, his path from the captured machine-gun nest, and Reddy's bump of direction was a good one, else would he never have found his way through the blinding smoke and dust of battle to the exact spot where Fritz lay, shot through the leg and helpless to move.

Not daring to carry him on his back—for the barrage was growing every moment more intense—he dragged him from shell-hole to shell-hole, sometimes between the holes picking him up and running with him a few steps,

and if a shell came too close falling *on top* of him, and so by slow degrees bringing him back to the lines and safety in a deserted German dugout used for a first-aid dressing-station.

Fritz had fainted from loss of blood and Reddy left him to the doctors and nurses. He was terribly tired now. That dragging and carrying of Fritz had been the last straw; every muscle and every nerve were strained to the limit. He would have said he was all in, but suddenly the German barrage lifted and in the awful silence always following a lifted barrage the counter attack began.

In that fearful silence he heard Ted's voice ringing clear, "Forward, men!" and caught a glimpse of him dashing ahead, leading his men to meet the oncoming attack. It was the first glimpse Reddy had had of him in five days, and he had not known whether his lieutenant was dead or alive. At night the men had slept where they happened to find themselves, if it could be called sleep that was ready to be banished any moment at the sound of the "Alert" or to repel a counter attack, and platoons and even battalions were greatly mixed. It did n't matter; they could easily be straightened out when the battle was over.

Now, at that glimpse of Lieutenant Jarvis, all Reddy's exhaustion was forgotten. The blood ran hot in his veins once more, and shouting to the men around him as Ted had shouted, "Forward, men!" he was dashing forward with uplifted rifle when the sound of a shot just behind him and a half-smothered groan made him turn quickly.

On the ground lay Jim O'Hara, groaning and ghastly white.

"I tripped on me rifle, Reddy, and the durned thing went off an' hurt me fut," he said feebly. But he did not look at Reddy and a terrible suspicion turned Reddy deadly sick for a moment. Could that be an S. I. W.? Jim O'Hara, who loved him and whom he had loved! Reddy would not believe it. But there was no time now to investigate.

"Get back to the dressing-station the best you can, I must be off," he said gruffly. And Jim, dragging himself painfully back to the First Aid, ghastly white and trembling, knew that Reddy knew, and would have given his life to undo what he had done in a quick impulse of overwhelming fear. He had seen those gray ranks rushing forward and the boy's soul had shriveled. He had had little to eat and almost no sleep for five days and nights; and at the best he had little courage, either physical or moral. He had heard some one say those were the famous Prussian Guards, and at that his spirit had recoiled and on a sudden impulse he had done the dastardly deed. Now, dragging his bleeding foot and suffering exquisite pain from the wound as he betook himself to the dressing-station, where he knew he would be under suspicion once more, he was repenting bitterly. Reddy would never love him again. Reddy, who was the soul of courage, could never understand or make any allowance for the abject fear that had so overwhelmed Jim at the very sound of "Prussians."

Reddy—rushing forward to meet that oncoming tide, and caring little whether it were Prussian, Saxon, or

Bavarian—was for a few moments as sick of soul as Jim. Then the battle lust seized him, Jim was forgotten, and he raced forward gaily to meet the grim advancing lines of gray.

Hours of desperate fighting followed and the ground was strewn with dead and dying, Germans and Americans, but at last the Prussians began to give way and were swept steadily back until, by late nightfall, the Juvigny Plateau was cleared and the objective for which they had been fighting through five long and bloody days was gained.

Late that night platoons and battalions were assembled and rolls were called. It had been a fierce fight and many a name was called to which only an ominous silence made answer. But Ted heard with delight Reddy's ringing response. He had not been sure of Reddy's fate; he had caught no glimpse of him through those five bitter days. Now, as soon as the men were dismissed to the hot supper the cooks were rushing up on trucks from the rear, he looked him up.

"Reddy!" he said, unconsciously using the familiar name for the first time, as he gripped the boy's hand and looked straight into Reddy's blue eyes with a world of affection in his own brown ones.

At the sound of that friendly "Reddy," all the old love, the almost passionate adoration Reddy had cherished for his lieutenant before that fateful revelation on the transport, rushed back in an overwhelming tide.

"Lieutenant Jarvis!" was all he said, but his glance was as full of adoration as Ted's was of affection.

"Thank God, you were one of the lucky ones!" said Ted.

"We were both lucky," Reddy answered simply, "but I always knew we would be."

"How did you know?" asked Ted, smiling.

"I never doubted it a moment, sir, when I thought of the 'reserves' and remembered those words the chaplain read—'Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.' "

The chaplain was standing close behind the two, but Reddy did not know it. He was older than either Ted or Reddy, but he was young of heart. His work through those five days had been as strenuous as theirs—helping the stretcher-bearers, comforting the wounded and dying, taking down last messages, never far from the thick of the fight and often longing to pick up the rifle of a dead comrade and rush into battle, but restrained always by the knowledge that his post of duty lay elsewhere. Now he laid his arm over Reddy's shoulders.

"Fine, my boy!" he said warmly. "I like to hear you say that. It 's the kind of faith that makes good soldiers."

Reddy turned quickly. He was a Catholic and the chaplain was a Protestant, but Protestant and Catholic were all the same in the front lines.

"Thank you, Father Bradley," said Reddy, blushing a little under his bronze, and eagerly grateful for the commendation. "I 've never been much of a Christian, sir, but I think I 'll always be one now."

The chaplain rather liked the kindly Catholic title Reddy had given him. His arm dropped from Reddy's shoulders and he grasped the hand Ted had relinquished.

"Good!" he said earnestly; "and come to me when you need any help."

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE PLAYGROUND

THAT was a night for sleeping! The Germans were driven well off the plateau and reported retreating in mass to the Hindenburg Line. There would be no danger that night of either counter attacks or gas. There might still be bombardments from distant artillery, but the men dug themselves in or occupied the deserted trenches and dugouts of the Germans and dropped at once into sleep so profound it would have taken more than shrapnel or shell to awaken them.

The next morning, after their first comfortable breakfast in five days—hot and eaten at leisure—the orders of the day announced that the division was to entrain for rest billets, and a fresh division would take its place. Reddy's regiment, which had especially distinguished itself, had fought hard and needed rest, and to which, also, a ten-days' furlough was due—since they had been in France more than four months—was sent to Aix-les-Bains, the great playground France had turned over to the American soldiers.

The officers were not required to spend their leave with the regiment, and Ted at once determined to spend it in Helen's vicinity.

"I 'm not going with you, Sergeant," Ted said to Reddy, as he was about to entrain for Aix-les-Bains.

Reddy was much disappointed.

"Why not, sir?" he asked, and was in a moment covered with confusion at his presumption. "I beg your pardon, sir," he interposed quickly, before Ted could reply. And then with the twinkle in his eye and the gay little toss of his head so characteristic of him, he added:

"Mine not to make reply,
Mine not to ask you 'Why?'
Mine but to do and die
For my lieutenant."

Ted laughed.

"I would just as soon tell you if I knew why, or if I knew where I was going. I just thought, I suppose, that it would be a more absolute rest to get away from the regiment for a while."

"I 'm sorry, sir," said Reddy soberly; "but no doubt you 're right."

He was beginning to be as sensitive where Lieutenant Jarvis was concerned as any lady over her lover; and he was a little hurt that Ted should want to take his furlough away from the regiment, and him. To do Reddy justice, however, he knew that this was an extremely silly way to feel and he suppressed the feeling at once.

"Au revoir," he said returning Ted's grip with one that made the lieutenant wince. And then he smiled that smile that Ted always rather envied him—a queer little twisted smile that seemed to take one at once into his confidence. *"Je serai bien aise de vous voir encore, quand notre furlough sera fini.* I hope you don't mind my trying my poor French on you, sir?"

"Good work! *Vous serez un veritable Français* by

the time you get back to America," said Ted, rather astonished at Reddy's proficiency and recognizing his naïve bid for a compliment. And then he added, little guessing how true his words were to prove: "No doubt I shall be sorry enough that I did n't go with you, Sergeant. I suppose you know that you are going to the most beautiful spot in all France, among the woods and lakes of the Savoy Mountains? And you will live in the hotels and sleep in the beds and eat from the china and linen that kings and dukes and princes have used in other days. France has been very generous to our boys."

Reddy's eyes shone. He loved the idea of luxury, perhaps because he had had none of it in his vagabondish life. In the dreams he was constantly dreaming, through which the vision of Helen was sure to float as a central figure, he was always master of fabulous wealth and showering every luxury on his mother, his sister, his father—and Helen. He had only a rather vague idea as to what constituted luxuries, and he knew his ideas were vague. Now he was going to find out, in a fashion, and he intended to make a study of them so that he should know what they were and how to use them when that ship of his, that was still far in the offing, should come sailing in some day.

The regiment was to entrain at noon and there was one visit that Reddy must make first. He was sick at the thought of it, but it had to be done. He must go and see Jim O'Hara at the evacuation hospital.

He had seen Fritz the night before and found that he had been already operated upon and was resting quietly. It would probably be a long time before he would be back in the regiment, but he was not to lose his leg; and

that gave Reddy almost as much joy as it gave Fritz.

As he walked down toward the evacuation hospital he was trying to determine upon his attitude toward Jim. Should he be stern or kind? He decided upon the sternness as most consonant with his own feeling and most salutary for Jim, and then he walked into the hospital and saw the boy lying on his cot ready to be "evacuated." Another hour and his visit would have been too late, Jim would have been gone.

As he caught a glimpse of Reddy the boy turned quickly away and buried his face in his pillow. Deep, noiseless sobs shook his slim figure. Reddy was vividly reminded of the morning after he had taken the Carleton automobile and Miss Seymour had come to him. He remembered how tenderly she had put her hand on him and how gently she had spoken to him, and for the life of him he could not utter the harsh words he had been conning on his walk to the hospital.

"Jim," he said kindly and waited a moment, wondering what to say next. This was entirely too serious a matter for him to say, as Helen had said to him, "It is not so bad as all that." Nothing in the world could be worse, in Reddy's estimation, than this deed of Jim's. The only answer to his tentative "Jim," was redoubled sobbing that threatened to become convulsive. He repeated it a little more softly, and when there was still no answer but the sobbing, he moved closer and laid his hand on Jim as Helen had once laid hers on him. "Why did you do it, Jim?" he asked gently and sorrowfully.

That broke the boy's heart. He whirled round upon his back and threw his arms above his head in anguish.

"My God, Reddy, I dunno! I *dunno!*" he cried

brokenly, between gasping sobs he tried in vain to smother. "I niver meant to. It come on me all uv a suddent. Oh, my God! *My God!*"

"Hush, Jim!" said Reddy, a little sternly. This crying like a baby after the milk was spilt was of no use, in his opinion, and he was nervously mortified to have the attention of the hospital drawn to them, as it was beginning to be.

"What kin I do, Reddy? What *kin* I do?" Jim hushed his tones at Reddy's admonition, and spoke in an agitated whisper. "Oh, Reddy, will they give me another chanst, d' yeh think? Oh, Reddy, won't yeh *beg* 'em to give me another chanst? I 'll sure go straight into hell-fire next time. I *wisht* the Huns had a-kilt me!"

He was growing hysterical and Reddy had little use for hysterics of any kind. But Jim must be soothed; he could not leave the boy like this. He spoke rather sternly again; it was necessary to be stern if he would calm him.

"See here, Jim," he began, "I 'll tell you what I 'll do: I 'll see Lieutenant Jarvis and Captain Thomas and I'll tell them you 're sorry and want another chance; and I think you 'll get it. But you 've got to be quiet now and act like a man, and take your medicine, whatever it may be."

Jim's lip quivered and his eyes widened with a new and terrible thought.

"D' yeh think I 'll be sent to the stone wall, Reddy?"

"I don't know," said Reddy, in as casual a tone as he could command. "We 'll do our best for you. The only thing you have to worry about is to see that you

stand up like a man and take whatever 's coming to you." Then he added in a more kindly way: "Good-by, Jim, I must go. I 'm awfully sorry it happened, but don't give up. You 'll come back, I firmly believe, and perhaps win a *croix de guerre*. Who knows?"

Jim smiled a pitiful smile and gripped Reddy's hand as if he would never let it go.

"Good-by, Reddy," he whispered. "You 're a brick an' I loves yeh. Oh, God, why *did* I have to be born a coward!"

Reddy saw Captain Thomas and Lieutenant Jarvis and put Jim's case up to them as strongly as his Irish eloquence could put it. They had heard of the case and had felt only contempt for Jim, mingled with some humiliation that the company should have had a case of S. I. W. But their contempt was softened to something like pity by Reddy's eloquence and they promised to do their best for him.

"He 's built that way, and I honestly think he could n't help it," was Reddy's clinching argument. "But this experience has made him over, and if he 's given a chance to come back he 'll make good, I 'm certain."

It was rather a sober Reddy that joined his comrades at the train, but it was a gay and carefree and happy Reddy that stepped out on the platform in beautiful Aix-les-Bains, and was received and made at home at once by the Y. M. C. A. in such an artful fashion that he never guessed he was being guided into the best ways of seeing the place and having a good time. He thought he was following his own sweet will on his own initiative, without suggestion or compulsion.

For seven days Reddy led a strenuous life. He might have stayed in bed late in the mornings, as many of the men did, and when he was up contented himself with playing pool or checkers in the beautiful casino, or reading in the luxurious library, with an occasional ride on the lake or walk to the springs or woods. Many of the men were finding such an idle life the most perfect rest for exhausted nerves and muscles.

But not Reddy. His eager soul must crowd every day with experiences, must lose no chance to see and to learn. Life with him meant action, unless it also meant reading and study. His fervid spirit plunged with as much ardor into books as into sports and sight-seeing. Subconsciously Reddy's feeling was that he must lose no opportunities, that he must crowd into these flying hours all the lost opportunities of his boyhood, and some of the education and culture he attributed to Ted and Helen.

He was learning the meaning of luxuries. The beautifully decorated rooms, the comfortable beds, the table with its dainty appointments, accomplished serving and fine cooking, the luxurious baths, the gorgeous casino—Reddy liked to people all these places, in his imagination, with the beautifully dressed throngs of the rich and the noble that had once filled them. It was a life that suited him, he said to himself, and one day it should be his.

Not that he wanted to live a life of luxurious idleness, but he wanted to go out to the activities of business or pleasure from just such surroundings. Everything delighted him, even the meager breakfast of a roll and a cup of coffee, which most of the men scorned, preferring

to spend their money for something more substantial at the Y. M. C. A. canteen.

He had invested in a little guide-book and he knew what he wanted to see and how to see it, even without the help of the Y. M. C. A. counselors, always ready to help with advice or suggestion. All of his old squad, what was left of it—Fritz and Jim were absent, and some of the others—clamored to go with him on his expeditions. Reddy rather liked the office of courier, but he made his men work. Sometimes it was a ride on the little cog-wheel railway up Mont du Chat, or on the steamboat on the lake to the old monastery at the other end, with free tickets furnished by the Y. M. C. A. But oftener it was a climb up the bridle-path of the Dent du Chat with its wonderful view of the Swiss Alps and Mont Blanc; or a swim in Lac du Bourget, or a long row around it; or a nine-mile tramp to the gay little city of Chambéry, with afternoon tea at some attractive café; or a trip through St. Simon to the romantic gorge and cascades of Grésy or to the picturesque Defile des Combes; and often just a long walk through beautiful woodland paths with wonderful views of mountains and lake that thrilled Reddy's beauty-loving soul. He had never known there was such beauty in the world as each new walk in those Savoy Mountains revealed to him.

And if the expeditions were in the morning, Reddy was sure to bring his party home in time for the delicious twelve-o'clock "breakfast with the fork"; and if they were in the afternoon he brought them home in time for a warm bath in the big bath-establishment beyond the ancient Triumphal Arch of Campanus, a clean shave, and a careful dressing for dinner. They had

had fresh clothes throughout furnished them when they started on this vacation trip, and Reddy felt very much as a gentleman should when he sat down to his seven-o'clock dinner in the beautiful dining-room. It was a simple dinner enough, with its four courses of soup, meat with a vegetable, salad, and dessert with coffee; but it was cooked as only French chefs can cook and it all seemed very delightful to Reddy. The evenings were spent in the casino, listening to Europe's band or dancing to its music, very often with a friendly American girl from the Y. M. C. A. canteen. Ah, it was the life, all right! And Reddy intended to have some of the same kind of good times in his life when he should return to America.

And always, whether walking through woodland paths or climbing some steep mountain, or rowing on the lake, or dancing in the casino, Reddy had visions of Helen sharing all these joys with him. Perhaps, some day. Life lay before him; he held the world in his grasp; some day he would come into the inheritance of gentle breeding and cultured manners that were his due. And then, why not?

Reddy had had seven days of this boundless bliss when he came in to dinner one evening fresh from a bath and a clean shave, looking very handsome in his thoroughly brushed uniform, and stopped stock-still half-way down the long walk to his place at table at the farther end of the dining-room. His heart almost stopped beating for a second and then sent a tremendous tide of blood rushing to his temples. He recovered himself in an instant and advanced quickly to the table a few feet in front of him, to greet Helen's smiling eyes and outstretched hand.

Where had she come from? How long had she been here? How had she happened to come to Aix-les-Bains? Reddy poured his questions upon her, hardly giving her time to answer. Last of all he asked confidently: "Did you get my card?" He had sent Helen a card, almost the first moment of his arrival in Aix, telling her he had been one of the lucky ones to come out alive from the Juvigny Plateau, and telling her, also, that he was to spend ten days at Aix. From the moment that his eyes had fallen on her in the dining-room he had believed, exultingly, that she had come in response to his card.

"No," said Helen, "I haven't heard from any one lately. Our hospital unit has been moved down to the Toul sector; and I 've been sent down here for a few days' rest while the men are moving us."

She did not say, but her eyes said it for her, "I am so delighted to find you here."

Reddy could not stay talking—his own dinner was to be eaten—but she promised to meet him in the casino when the meal should be over. He rushed through his dinner and was waiting for her in the hotel foyer when she came out of the dining-room.

"It 's too early for the casino, and it 's a lovely evening. Wouldn't you like a little walk first?" he asked diffidently. "If you 've just arrived I should like to introduce you to some of the beauties of Aix."

He took her down to his favorite woodland path by the borders of the lake. The water was like glass, with the crests of the surrounding mountains and the soft rose and lilac and daffodil of the evening sky reflected in its depths. He pointed out Mont du Chat and glowed

in his description of the wonderful panorama of the Swiss Alps that he had seen from its top.

"I 've never known there was such beauty in the world! Will you go up there with me to-morrow or the day after? I 'll get up a party; I want you to see it. I thought of you every minute while I was looking at it," he said hurriedly.

Helen promised readily. They arranged to go the next day, if it were fine, for fear the day after might not be.

"You 're liking it here, Pierre; are n't you?" she asked, using the "Pierre" very naturally, for she had decided it was his due among strangers.

"I 'm loving it, Miss Seymour," Reddy answered ardently. "When I get back to America I shall work hard and make money and be able to live as the people live who used to come to Aix. Perhaps I 'll come back here and visit and bring my wife when the war 's over."

He had glanced at Helen with that peculiar little twisted smile of his and that sidelong glance that he used only when he was saying something that lay very near his heart, and was a bid for the sympathy of his listener.

Helen gave him the sympathy, but so tactfully that he did not dare venture farther, and she made an excuse of the evening dews to get back soon to the casino, where Reddy spent an evening of exquisite torture—on the pinnacles of bliss when Helen was dancing with him, and talking in a friendly, happy way; in the depths of despair when she was dancing with some of the men he had introduced to her and on whom he thought she lavished her smiles unnecessarily.

They had their trip up the Dent du Chat the next day by railroad and they went up again the day after on foot. Reddy never tired of the view from the summit and could not tire of showing it to Helen. They had one day's trip down the lake to the old monastery, and then came Reddy's last evening. His regiment was to entrain for camp in the morning.

These trips had been in parties, which were very delightful but gave no opportunity for confidential conversation. There had been moments, since Helen's arrival, when Reddy felt a little bitter. Why had she expressed no sympathy for him in the battle he had just come through? After all, he could just as well not have come out of it; hundreds had not—thousands, for all he knew.

But Reddy could not cherish bitterness toward Helen. There was some good reason, perhaps lack of opportunity. He determined that this last evening he would have her to himself, if it were possible to manage it. It would be a lovely evening. The moon, that had been only a silver crescent hanging over the Mont du Chat the evening of Helen's arrival, was enough of a moon to make lovely lights and shadows on the water by this time. He would ask her to go on the lake with him.

He met her as she was going in to dinner and he proffered his request boldly:

"Will you go on the lake with me for a while this evening? It 's my last night and it 's moonlight—two very good reasons for your saying 'yes.' "

"Then I 'll say it. Yes, I 'd love to go."

There had been no perceptible hesitation in Helen's reply, but there had been in her thought.

"Reddy 's entirely too fascinating," she had said to herself more than once in the last three days. "I don't see how any girl could resist him if he made up his mind he really wanted her. If I were not so old I 'm afraid I 'd be in some danger myself."

Reddy was twenty and Helen twenty-three—an insurmountable discrepancy in age in Helen's opinion!

Reddy had secured the best boat on the lake with the prettiest cushions, and he was a fairly skilful oarsman. They had been skimming the water, Reddy rowing with ease and keeping up his usual lively chatter, for he was always Reddy of the ready tongue. He shipped his oars after a while and let the boat float. The sunset glow that had set every mountain-crest ablaze and made the still water a sheet of flame and wrapped Helen in a rosy nimbus that gave her an almost unearthly beauty in Reddy's eyes, was rapidly fading, leaving only pale, cold moonlight on lake and forest.

Helen suddenly asked a question, quite unrelated to anything they had been saying. She had been wondering where Ted could be and whether it could be possible he was in Aix. She would find out.

"Is the whole regiment here, Pierre?" she asked.

"All except the dead and wounded and a few of the officers," Reddy answered.

"Dead and wounded! What do you mean, Reddy?"

She had turned white and her gray eyes widened with a strained look of terror. She had forgotten the "Pierre" in the stress of the moment, and to Reddy the old name sounded sweeter. But he did not quite understand her excitement.

"Did n't you know we had been in battle?" he asked wonderingly.

"No! *No!* Where? When?" she gasped.

"The Juvigny Plateau. We came straight from there here," Reddy said briefly.

Helen had heard how bitter the fighting had been on the Juvigny Plateau, but she had not known that the one American division spoken of in the papers with extravagant laudations was *her* division, as she called the one to which Ted and Reddy belonged. She was frantic with fear of what revelations might be in store for her, and she spoke with a tremulous effort at self-control:

"Oh, Reddy! I have heard what a terrible battle it was! Thank God you came out of it alive!"

She leaned forward, as she spoke, and laid her hand lightly on Reddy's, which was resting on the idle oar.

Quick as a flash his other hand was on hers and he was holding hers pressed close in both of his.

"Miss Seymour," he said earnestly and with a little break in his voice that went to Helen's heart, "I thank God, too. It 's wonderful to be alive and sitting in this boat with you on this beautiful evening, when all those others are lying dead."

"Were there many dead, Reddy?" Her voice was hardly more than a whisper and she was shivering uncontrollably. Her ghastly fear seemed to her reality now.

"A great many, I 'm afraid, and a lot of wounded. There 's hardly more than half the regiment here. It was a terrible battle, but I never had any fear either for Lieutenant Jarvis or myself after the story he told me about the 'reserves' at Mons."

And then Reddy repeated General Hatfield's story very simply but very powerfully. And to Helen, listening, the hand that Reddy held no longer trembling but lying quietly in his, the most wonderful part of the strange story was that Ted had told it to Reddy.

She was happy now. The rigors that had been convulsing her relaxed. She did not know where Ted was, but she was sure he was neither among the dead nor the wounded.

Reddy was still holding her hand and now she gently drew it away and spoke to him quietly:

"I thank God again that you are alive, Reddy, and now will you take me home? It has been a terrible shock to me to hear of the battle; but I 'm so glad, *so glad!*"

Reddy thought she was glad for him—and she was, though not for him alone—and it set his heart to glowing, though he was disappointed to have his last evening cut short.

On the way back they stopped at the casino to inquire for letters. There were two for Reddy and one for Helen. Reddy's were big formidable-looking documents and when he had opened them he handed them shyly to Helen to read.

"Oh, Reddy! I 'm so glad and so proud!" She fairly radiated joy and congratulations as she spoke, for one letter was Reddy's commission as second-lieutenant and the other was from General Pershing.

General Pershing's was a brief letter, but it spoke in the highest terms of the reports he had received of Sergeant Paschal's bravery at Juvigny, and it notified him that he had been awarded the Decoration for Distin-

guished Service, which the general would bestow upon him in person at a suitable opportunity.

Helen did not open her own letter until she had reached her room. It was from Ted, as she had recognized at her first glance at the envelope, and it had been forwarded from her old base hospital to her new one in the Toul sector, and forwarded again to Aix. It read:

DEAR HELEN:

I 'm not going to Aix-les-Bains to spend my leave with the regiment. I 'm going to spend it with you. You 'll see me almost before you receive this. I 'm just out of the fight on Juvigny Plateau. It was my first experience in battle and every one says it was a stubborn one. I believe it was, but thank God I and your friend Reddy were among the lucky ones. I 'll tell you all about it when I see you. Till then, Yours,

TED.

Helen could have cried aloud in the bitterness of her disappointment. Think of the ten long, beautiful days she could have had with him! And even worse than her own disappointment was the thought of his. She could not bear to think of him, fresh from battle and wanting sympathy and comfort. There were not likely to be any more leaves soon; Helen knew that everything was shaping for a tremendous crisis. Almost surely, before she could see him, he would be in battle again. And who could tell that he would be "lucky" a second time!

There was nothing that she could do but sit down and write to him and tell him how sorry she was to have missed him, and pour out all the thankfulness and joy of her heart that he had come safely out of his first battle.

CHAPTER XXII

"COUSIN PIERRE"

TED took Helen's letter from the mail almost at the same moment that he greeted Reddy's return to camp. He read the letter as he walked toward his quarters, and as he read it he gnashed his teeth mentally.

"That boy has all the luck!" he said to himself ruefully, and looked up to see Reddy coming toward him with beaming countenance.

"Hello, Lieutenant," Ted greeted him, giving his hand a tremendous grip. "Where are your bars?"

"I 'm just on my way to get them, sir," said Reddy, beaming still more broadly. "I did n't suppose you 'd heard."

"The colonel told me. And I hear there are to be decorations, too. Congratulations! From all I hear you were a wonder!"

They stopped to talk, and in response to Ted's question as to how he liked Aix, Reddy answered joyfully:

"Fine, sir! It 's the grandest place I 've ever been in." He added diffidently: "Miss Seymour was there the last part of the time."

Ted was glad he had been prepared for this statement.

"Miss Seymour!" he exclaimed with well-feigned surprise. "What took her there?"

"I think her superintendent sent her for a rest while they were moving the hospital down to the Toul sector. She looked as if she needed it, when she first arrived."

"The Toul sector!" Ted still pretended to be uninformed. "Then if you or I get wounded, perhaps we 'll have Miss Seymour to nurse us."

"I hope so, sir," said Reddy soberly, and suddenly noticed that Ted was wearing a captain's silver bars. He saluted again, gaily.

"So it 's *Captain* Jarvis, is it?" he said. "I did n't notice at first. Congratulations, sir! Are you captain of our company?"

"Yes, Captain Thomas has been made a major. You know Major White was horribly gassed. They say he 'll never be fit for work again, and he 's to have an indefinite leave when he gets out of hospital."

They talked a few minutes longer, Ted asking many questions about Aix with the hope of more news of Helen, which he did not receive.

They parted with a last word from Ted:

"I 'll meet you at mess, Lieutenant. I 'm delighted you are one of us."

And Reddy answered, "Thank you, Captain."

Ted went off to write to Helen and Reddy went to see about his officer's uniform, feeling as if he were walking on air. He was an officer, and Captain Jarvis had called him "one of us." That future he had visioned for himself was beginning to materialize. It was the entering wedge that was difficult; the rest would all be easy.

This was the tenth of September. The division, Ted's and Reddy's, was stationed at Pont-a-Moussou on the Moselle. They were in the southeastern claw of that

pincers that was to nip off the St.-Mihiel pocket, straighten the line from Verdun to Metz, and restore two hundred square miles of territory to France.

The army was tremendously elated. They knew that for the first time they were to act independently as Americans, under their own generals, and carry out the plans made by their own general staff. This pocket that they were to wipe out had remained intact on French territory since the first German advance in 1914. It was a constant menace to Verdun and it controlled the richest ore-fields of France. It was an objective worthy the steel of the confident Americans.

There had never been in the history of war such a concentration of men, guns, ammunition, tanks, airplanes, supplies of all kinds, as were rolling up for weeks, and always at night, behind those lines stretching from Pont-a-Moussou around St.-Mihiel, at the apex of the triangle, northward to Verdun. The American high command was taking no chances. This was the first real offensive of that great American Army that for months had been crossing the seas, an almost unbroken line of transports. There must be no possibility of failure.

At one o'clock in the early morning of the twelfth of September the artillery preparation began, one of the most terrific in all history. There was no sleeping through that shrieking and screaming of shells and the pound and roar of the heavy guns. Every man was at his post and at five o'clock the artillery preparation held up for a moment, then the rolling barrage started, and the great attack began.

This was war after Reddy's own heart. The Germans fled before their advancing hosts, in many places making

hardly any resistance, terrified by the dashing attack of these new troops, and the Americans swept up prisoners and sent them to the rear as if they were gathering apples in harvest.

By noon the Americans had taken Lahayville, St. Baussant, the Bois de Montmare and Vilcey; by nightfall they had captured the big town of Thiaucourt and swept far beyond. But nightfall did not stop them. They rested long enough for supper with hot coffee, furnished somehow by the mess-sergeants, and then, with the tanks going on ahead and clearing the way, they swept into Pannes through Nonusard and surrounded the impregnable mountain fortress of Montsec.

They owed Montsec a grudge. The mountain dominated the whole country-side, and for months no soldier or no civilian had recklessly shown himself on an uncamouflaged highway but a shell from a gun or a bullet from a sniper on Montsec found him out.

There was some stiff resistance at Montsec—it was a veritable fortress—but when the regiment holding it found they were surrounded and the Germans fleeing in every direction, they surrendered. Ted's company had been the first to scale the heights, and as the surrendered Germans were marched down and sent off to the rear, Ted and Reddy with a band of curious soldiers at their heels went all over the mountain and found it a honeycomb of steel dugouts carpeted, electric-lighted, and furnished with the finest mahogany, looted from the residents of the neighboring St.-Mihiel.

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Ted as he came suddenly around a projecting side of a cliff shutting them off perfectly from the line of the French and American trenches

and facing the German frontiers on the north and east. Here were hanging gardens, terraces with hammocks, and garden-chairs and tables, where the officers had evidently been in the habit of lounging and smoking and drinking, perfectly protected by the wall of rock at their backs.

"What do you think of this, Reddy?" The two were exploring together. "I call this war de luxe."

"The beasts!" growled Reddy, with strong disgust, "swilling and guzzling!"

Everywhere were beer bottles, half-empty glasses, and remnants of food. Reddy had once been rather a hard drinker for a boy, but he held very strong ideas now on the beastliness and, what was almost worse to him, the unsoldierliness of drinking.

It was a hurried inspection they were making; the troops were to press on to St.-Mihiel, and Ted's company now was ordered forward as a vanguard.

They had been marching and fighting all night and by nine o'clock on the morning of the thirteenth they were in St.-Mihiel, and by three in the afternoon they had joined, in Vigneulles, the western claw of the pincers, which had met a more stubborn resistance and therefore had made slower progress than the southern claw, thus eliminating completely the St.-Mihiel salient.

There was still work to be done in clearing out a forest north of St.-Mihiel, but that was not long in accomplishing and in two days their work was finished—the St.-Mihiel salient wiped out, two hundred square miles and innumerable towns and villages restored to France, sixteen thousand prisoners taken, hundreds of big guns, machine guns and great stores of ammunition

captured. There had been casualties among the Americans, but most of them were light, and it was a joyous, proud, and exultant army that settled down for a few days' rest.

The twelfth and thirteenth were on Thursday and Friday—lucky Friday the thirteenth. The Sunday following was a day to make one glad to be alive. Ted knew that Helen's hospital was not far away, and he knew it was probable that all nurses had been recalled to duty when the great attack was ready to begin. At least it would do no harm to drive down to the base hospital, only fifteen miles away, and find out.

Since Ted was a captain, it was easy to commandeer a car for this trip, and the early afternoon found him rolling through a beautiful country unravaged by war, over good roads and under the soft blue sky of September. He was almost childishly happy. He was going to see Helen, and he had not seen her since he had become the veteran of two great battles—the hard fight on the Juvigny Plateau, and the more dashing and triumphant battle of St.-Mihiel. He had looked death in the face not once but many times, and death had lost all terrors for him. If in any later battle-field he should fall, well and good, he would have died gloriously; there could be no happier death. If he should escape, then life would be the fuller, richer, more joyous for his having faced death and vanquished it. And because he had looked death in the face so often his heart was exultant with joy to be alive in this exquisite September weather, and to be going to see Helen.

A mile or two out from camp he saw ahead of him a soldierly figure that he recognized at the first glance.

No one else carried himself with quite the jaunty grace that belonged to Reddy. He was wearing the new uniform, donned for the first time—Reddy was entirely too canny to wear anything but old clothes into battle—and he was good to look at, Ted thought, as he stopped his car beside him.

"Whither away, Lieutenant?" he called. Reddy started slightly at the unexpected hail, and looked up, his bright boyish face framed in its close crop of red curls looking extremely handsome to Ted.

"I don't know, sir; just out for a walk, I suppose," he answered. But the quick color surged into his face as he spoke, and it flashed into Ted's mind that Reddy's destination on foot and his in a car were the same. No doubt Reddy had been unable or had not ventured to commandeer a car.

"I ought to ask him to ride with me," thought Ted, "but I don't want to; I want this visit all to myself. Unless he gets a lift from some one more obliging than I am he can't possibly make it in less than three hours, and by that time I can have had my visit with Helen, or I can have hurried her off where I can have her all to myself and where Reddy can't find her."

But Ted's good angel was on hand to urge a kinder way, and he was always glad, afterward, that he had yielded to the better impulse. There was something so pathetic in the thought of Reddy, looking so handsome in his brave new clothes, with childlike vanity wanting to show himself to Helen in them, that Ted could n't bear the thought of his disappointment.

"I 'm going to call on Miss Seymour," he said to

Reddy; "that is, if I find she 's back from Aix. Don't you want to come along?"

Reddy hesitated. Judging from his own sense of disappointment that he was not to see Helen alone, he felt sure that his presence would spoil the visit for Captain Jarvis. Ted saw the hesitation and guessed at its cause.

"Come, jump in!" he urged cordially. "You ought to show yourself to Miss Seymour in your new uniform; she 'll like to see you in it."

"Perhaps I 'm mistaken," thought Reddy; "perhaps he does n't care for her as I care." And without more ado he took his place beside Ted, thanking him earnestly but not effusively. Ted liked Reddy's manner to him, it was always simple and direct and mingled with a little deference that he had not discarded with his accession to a commission.

They found Helen. She had been ordered back from Aix the day after Reddy's departure. And it was a Helen overwhelmed with joy at sight of her two friends alive and whole. She was just coming out of one of the wards, a long wooden shack, and she stopped still as Ted hailed her, a little dazed and a little white from surprise and joy.

Reddy was out of the car and standing beside her, cap in hand, waiting for Ted to finish speaking.

"Jump in," Ted was saying. "We 'll take you wherever you are going."

"I 'm going wherever you want to take me," she answered with a smile that Ted wanted to think meant, "whither thou goest I will go." "That is," she added,

"if you will take me first to Miss Stanley, to see if she 'll let me off."

Then she turned to Reddy and extended both hands; whereupon Reddy dropped his cap and seized them both joyously.

"How grand you look, Lieutenant Paschal!" she exclaimed, and turning to Ted, "I 'm *that* proud of him, Lieutenant Jarvis!"

But at that she caught sight of Ted's *two* silver bars and laughed. "What! *Captain* Jarvis! This is *too* much!"

By this time Ted was out of the car and shaking hands with her, also.

"Oh, there are always surprises like that in the army," he said gaily. "The next time Lieutenant Paschal and I see you, we probably shall be colonels, at least, and very likely major-generals before the war 's over."

Reddy envied Ted the ease with which he spoke foolishly; for all he had been able to say thus far was, "I 'm so glad to see you again, Miss Seymour!"

Ted put them both in the tonneau and he proposed, as he started his car, that they should invite Miss Stanley to join them on their ride. "A party of four," he said to himself, "will give me a better chance at a few words alone with Helen than a party of three."

Miss Stanley was very willing; the last three days and nights had been strenuous ones, with long convoys of wounded coming in at all hours, but not many of the men were seriously wounded and there would be nothing to do that the nurses on duty could not attend to for the next three or four hours. And nothing could be more restful than a ride through the delicious autumn air.

As for Helen, she was in hilarious spirits. She had known that Ted and Reddy were in that battle, going on so near her, and the faint reverberation of whose guns she could catch at times. From the moment the first wounded began to come in she had been feverishly anxious, watching each convoy with sinking heart. And when the last had come in and no Reddy or Ted among the number, the anxiety was not lessened, rather increased. It might easily mean that they were among the dead.

To have them suddenly appear before her, alive, unhurt, was in the nature of a shock, and the sharp reaction left her as feverishly gay as she had been feverishly depressed. Reddy, who was in the tonneau beside Helen, was for a while as excitedly gay as she; and Ted—sitting in front with Miss Stanley, trying to keep his attention on the road and on entertaining his guest at the same time—was greatly distracted from both duties by the gay chatter going on behind him, and to which he was trying hard not to listen.

But it was infinitely more distracting to have the voices behind him drop into low, confidential tones. What in the world were they saying to each other! Why in the world had he been such a fool as to yield to a sudden impulse of good nature! Reddy had had Helen at Aix; this was his inning!

By dint of devoting himself sedulously to Miss Stanley and telling her some lively camp stories—Ted was rather good at that—he managed to succeed in *not* catching any of their words; but Reddy's tones, richly mournful and appealing, and Helen's, deeply sympathetic, he could not help catching.

In response to Helen's fervently expressed gratitude at seeing him safe and well after the battle Reddy was saying:

"I 've been lucky twice, Miss Seymour; it 's not in the nature of things that I shall not have to take my turn with the others in time."

"Oh, Reddy!" Helen interrupted, "you must not say that. You could come through a hundred battles untouched, and I believe you will. You were born for great things when this war is over, though you never can do anything greater or finer than the fighting you are doing now."

"Thank you," said Reddy, but he shook his head. "I like to hear you say that I 'm sure to come back, and I hope you 're right; but I don't know, no one can know. But if I don't come back, Miss Seymour, I want you to promise me something."

"With all my heart, Reddy—but you 're coming back," Helen insisted.

"I hope so." But he said it mournfully, and he shook his head once more. What was the matter with Reddy! Why was he so mournful!

Reddy himself did n't know. A sudden depression had come over him and he felt that he must say this to Helen now or he might never have another chance.

"You know," he said, hesitating a little—it did not seem quite the thing to be talking money matters to any one so radiantly beautiful as Helen was at that moment —"I 've paid back all that money my father paid Mr. Carleton, and since I 've been corporal and sergeant I 've been able to send them more money. I think they 're being very comfortable, and now that I 'm a lieutenant I

can send them much more. What I want, Miss Seymour, is to have me mother"—here Reddy stumbled miserably —"take the money I send her . . . to make a lady of herself. She 's the best mother in this world, but if she could have teachers, to teach her how to talk . . . and everything . . . I 'd like it fine. And you would know the kind of teachers she ought to have; and perhaps you could help her to find them. If I don't come back, there won't be any more pay, but there 'll be the insurance money—I 'm sorry it 's only ten thousand—and I want you to promise me that you 'll help me mother to use it for herself and Julie to make ladies of them both. It 's the wish of me heart," said Reddy, ardently, "to have Julie grow up to be as much like you as it 's possible."

Reddy's mournful cadences and his simple fervor, and, more than either, this revelation of the boy's ardent desire for himself and his family to be "gentlemen and ladies," touched Helen to the quick. It was a moment before she could control her voice to speak quietly.

"Reddy, dear," she said, "you are surely coming back. You will be able to help your mother and guide your little sister yourself. But, whatever happens, with all my heart I will help you to carry out your heart's desire."

It was these last two words that Ted caught as they suddenly ran off from the noisy paved road of a village street upon the silent turf in front of a village inn. Involuntarily he turned his head. Helen had laid her hand lightly on Reddy's and Reddy had clasped it fervently.

That was what Ted saw, and the blood rushed to his temples in a moment. He hardly knew whether it was

despair or rage that for a few moments blinded him and set his heart to throbbing furiously.

But Ted had not had the training of a soldier—and an officer—for nothing. He recovered himself in a moment and turned to Miss Stanley:

"Do you know anything about this inn? Do you think we could get tea here?" he asked.

"I don't know a thing about it," she answered, "but it looks attractive."

An old man came to the door and one glance at his calm, quiet face, and his neat cap and apron and well-brushed hair decided Ted. If tea were to be had here, he would like to have it.

On consideration it occurred to Ted that it might be as well to make it supper instead of tea. It was already nearly six—a rather late tea-hour—and the mess-supper would be over long before he and Reddy could reach camp. He consulted his host.

Yes, he could give them some broiled chickens; an omelet with fine herbs, perhaps; toasted brioches and a bit of salad; with some cheese of his wife's making and a cup of coffee.

It sounded very good to Ted, but he must consult the ladies. It sounded very good to Helen and Miss Stanley also, and in an incredibly short time they were seated at the table in a pretty walled garden behind the inn. Neither linen nor china were of the finest, but they were spotlessly clean and the supper would have done credit to the chef at the Crillon.

"I have never tasted such chicken," said Miss Stanley. "Nor such an omelet," said Helen. "Nor such coffee," said Ted. Reddy said nothing, for he had never tasted

anything like any of it. And had he been dining on sawdust it would all have been ambrosia to him, such exaltation was it to him to be sitting at table with Helen and Ted and actually dining with them, as if he had been doing it always.

All trace of his depression had vanished. No doubt he was intoxicated by the situation, but, whatever was the cause, he was the life of the little company. Camp jests and camp sayings lost nothing in wit or humor as he repeated them, and when he was induced to talk of his battle experiences the exploits of some comrade in arms were related with true Irish eloquence.

Ted was strangely quiet, and Helen wondered why. Did he think Reddy ought not to do so much of the talking in the presence of a superior officer? Helen did n't think Ted was that kind of martinet.

But Reddy began to think himself that he was doing too much of the talking and was greatly embarrassed by the thought.

"Captain Jarvis," he said in an effort to shift the lead, "tell Miss Stanley and Miss Seymour of the regiment we captured."

Ted smiled. He always smiled perforce when he thought of that regiment.

"You 're better at that kind of thing than I; go ahead," he said indifferently.

Reddy was a little nettled at Ted's indifference and he was beginning to think Ted was not behaving very well.

"All right," he said with apparent good nature; "I 'm willing to play Homer to your Achilles," and he dashed into a rollicking account of the surrender of the

regiment, much as if he were leading a charge against a machine-gun nest.

His recital was punctuated by laughter from his listeners, even Ted thawing a little under Reddy's picturesque account of the pompous colonel and the equally pompous major appearing suddenly from nowhere with a regiment at their heels, and presenting themselves to Ted and Reddy, who were awaiting the return of a squad of their men, and demanding to be conducted to a colonel, that they might surrender.

"You should have heard Captain Jarvis," said Reddy, "telling the pompous old fellow that the colonel was n't around just then, but he and Lieutenant Paschal could accommodate them. You see we were both of us scared to death; at least I was—Captain Jarvis never seems to be scared at anything—and we both drew our revolvers when this small army appeared against two of us, determined to sell our lives dearly. But at sight of the revolvers the whole regiment threw up their hands and shouted, *'Kamerad! Kamerad!'* and then the colonel made his demand."

"Don't forget the counting of the regiment," said Ted, interested in spite of himself, and thinking he saw signs of Reddy's coming to a conclusion.

"Not on your life!" said Reddy quickly. "You see, Miss Stanley, some of our men came up and Captain Jarvis sent them after horses to escort the regiment to the rear, and while we were waiting the colonel asked permission to have his men counted to find out how many were dead, wounded, and missing. You never saw anything so funny as the old fellow's mortification when *one* officer and *one* man were reported missing! Captain

Jarvis and I nearly exploded in the old fellow's face. Or, rather I should say I did; Captain Jarvis looked as solemn as a judge, though I could see well enough he was dying to laugh."

"You looked pretty solemn yourself, Lieutenant," interrupted Ted, who could n't quite stand all the little bouquets Reddy was so artfully and so constantly offering him.

"Did I? Thanks awfully; I 'm proud of myself if I did. But I wish you could have seen us, Miss Stanley—eight of us on horseback, driving those fifteen hundred men back to camp, like a bunch of cow-boys corralling a herd of steers. The company has called us 'The Cow-Punchers' ever since; but I hope the name won't stick."

"Why not?" said Ted irritably. "It 's a very good name."

"Oh, if you like it," said Reddy, whose patience with Ted's unreasonableness was about exhausted. "I prefer to be called a soldier, myself."

It was the first time Reddy had ever shown the slightest lack of deference to an officer—especially to his captain—and it brought Ted to his senses as nothing else could have done. He began to see that he had been acting the baby and to realize that Reddy had been very patient with him and had played a gentleman's part in trying to save the little party from the discomforts of his own sulks.

"You 're right, Lieutenant! right as rain!" he said genially, "and we 'll punch the head of the next man who calls either one of us a cow-puncher." And from that moment Ted was all that a genial host should be.

Driving back through a late sunset of rose and gold

and a long twilight of pale amethyst, Helen by his side, Reddy in the tonneau with Miss Stanley and their talking and laughing easily covering up anything that he and Helen might say, Ted began to feel happy once more. And then Helen said to him, under her voice:

"Don't you think Reddy is quite wonderful?"

"How?" clipped Ted, stiffening a little.

"Oh, the way he takes to the part of a gentleman so naturally. He was really quite blue on the way down—I think he has a feeling that he will not come through his next battle—but no one would have guessed at the table that he had ever had a 'premonition' or a sad thought; and listen to him now."

"What makes you think he has any premonitions?"

"Oh, he was giving me all kinds of last messages for his family. And what touched me most was his ardent longing that his mother and sister should 'make ladies of themselves'; I think he regards his father as already a gentleman. He paid me the prettiest little compliment in his Irish blarney fashion."

"What was it?" demanded Ted, trying not to appear too eager.

"He said it was his heart's desire to have Julie grow up as near like me as possible. The poor boy idealizes me."

"He 's a boy after my own heart," said Ted, dismissing entirely his ugly suspicions, "and he shows wonderful discrimination."

He and Reddy were late in getting back to camp and an orderly informed him that a gentleman was waiting in the mess-quarters to see him. The two had gone to the quarters together to get warm and have a bedtime smoke,

and as they entered Reddy saw a handsome young officer spring up and rush at Ted.

"Jules!" Ted cried, and looked as if he would like to hug his friend, while the officer seemed inclined to kiss Ted on the slightest provocation, he was so beamingly happy at the meeting.

In their eager talk Reddy was forgotten for a few minutes and he had just decided to slip away quietly, so as not to embarrass Ted if he should remember him, when he heard the officer say, sotto voce, "Who 's your good-looking friend?"

Ted turned quickly.

"Come here, Reddy," he called, and using for the second time the friendly nickname. "Lieutenant Jules Paschal, I want to introduce you to your cousin, Lieutenant Pierre Paschal."

Reddy, who had started forward at Ted's call, stopped and stiffened perceptibly. But Jules was so unaffectedly cordial in his greeting that after a few minutes of friendly talk Reddy began to thaw in spite of himself.

"I 'll wager, Cousin Pierre," said Jules finally, "that I have later news of your family than you have. I had a letter from my sister Genevieve this morning and she says your father and mother and little sister dined at the house the Sunday she was writing, just two weeks ago. She says she was charmed with her new uncle and aunt, but she lost her heart completely to the little Julie; 'as beautiful as an angel,' she called her."

Reddy's heart was won.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE RED SWEET WINE OF YOUTH

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead!
There 's none of these so lonely and poor of old,
But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold,
These laid the world away; poured out the red
Sweet wine of youth; gave up the years to be
Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,
That men call age; and those who would have been,
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

—Rupert Brooke.

CHATEAU THIERRY, St.-Mihiel and the Argonne Forest—three names enshrined in the hearts of all Americans for all time! "There they fought bravely and there they died!" And there they won glory, honor, an imperishable fame, and turned the tide, not of battle, but of war. There the war was won, for France and for the world. And of the three the most terrible fighting was in the Argonne Forest.

Once more Foch and Pershing had outgeneraled Ludendorff and Hindenburg. The Germans had expected the Americans to attack on the St.-Mihiel front and had rushed fresh divisions there to meet them; the attack on the Argonne Forest came in the nature of a surprise.

For three years the Germans had made a sort of pleasure-resort of the Argonnes. From the very nature of the ground—high hills, deep ravines, small rivers, impenetrable forests—they regarded themselves as immune

from attack. But, not content with these natural defenses, they had added a system of trenches lined with concrete; walls of solid stone masonry across roads; steel outpost houses, and, every few feet, barriers of barbed wire ten feet high nailed to the trees—defenses such as the world had never seen. No wonder the officers could take their ease with a feeling of absolute security in their *Offizierhausen* of many rooms, with running water, electric lights, electric bells, comfortable beds, rich mahogany furniture.

Often our men could advance but ten feet; then down must go their rifles and out with their nippers to cut the barbed wire in the inky blackness of a rainy night, while machine guns in trees just beyond the barbed wire played their devilish rat-a-tat-tat upon them at work. Fortunately the dark was not only a hindrance but a protection: in it the machine-gun fire often went wild, while the flash of the guns made a target for our sure-shooting rifles.

It was on the morning of September 26, in the gray dawn at half-past five o'clock, that Ted and Reddy went over the top, in the first wave of that terrible Battle of the Argonne, and close at Reddy's heels was Jim O'Hara; they had given him another chance. It was just two weeks from the day of the St.-Mihiel attack and a large part of that two weeks Reddy, Jules, and Ted had spent together. Jules had become very fond of his "Cousin Pierre" and tremendously proud of him.

"He is a good-looker, all right," he said to Ted. "And I like that Irish streak in him: it makes a fine combination with the French on our side."

"Yes, I think it does improve it," said Ted, quietly

puncturing Jules's vanity. Jules was inordinately proud of his old French blood.

On the night before the twenty-sixth the three had dined together in a village not far behind the trenches, at a little country inn where, as always in France in those days, they were served only by an old man, an old woman, and a young girl. Also as always in these little country inns, the dinner had been a simple but a delicious one.

It had been a farewell dinner, of a sort. They knew they were going into difficult fighting—they had heard something of the terrain to be fought over—and though Reddy and Ted regarded themselves as veterans now, the most seasoned veteran could not go into such action as lay before them without many sober thoughts: backward glances at the past, at home and loved ones; forward glances at what might lie just ahead of them.

They separated early, Reddy and Ted going off together to get their men in line for going over, Jules to his division, which was to be held in reserve.

Of course they made light of the parting, but it was in the minds of the three that they might very easily not meet again.

"Good-by, Cousin Pierre," said Jules. "No, au revoir. I 'm going to write home to-night and tell the family what a grand soldier-boy I 've found for a cousin—the idol of his company, the bosom friend of his captain."

Reddy and Ted laughed, and Jules, as mercurial as Ted was phlegmatic, threw his arm, first around Reddy and then around Ted, and gave each a resounding kiss on the cheek.

"There!" he said; "when you 're in France do as the French do. And you know," he added soberly, "after all it may not be 'au revoir.' "

Ted rather resented what he regarded as Jules's sentimentalism, but Reddy liked it. Since his association with Ted he had never given the free rein to his emotions that was natural to him, but he had believed, ever since his drive with Helen in Ted's car, that he was not to be one of the "lucky" ones in the next battle, and he was rather glad to have his feeling expressed for him.

Back in the trenches, Reddy and Ted stopped a moment before separating, each to seek his own position.

"We 'll probably see each other before we go over, not once but often," said Ted, trying to speak indifferently, "but I suppose we might as well say good-by now."

"I suppose so, sir," said Reddy soberly, and the two young men took each other by the hand with the firm clasp that means more to Americans than any embrace could.

"And Reddy," said Ted, hesitating and embarrassed, "there 's no harm in looking facts in the face. Of course I expect that we three shall have many more good dinners together, as we had to-night, but in case of the unexpected will you do something for me?"

Reddy nodded and gave the hand he held a firmer grip for reply; words, just then, were more than he could manage. Ted returned the grip and went on:

"If I should n't come back, Reddy," still hesitating, and the friendly name slipping from his lips as if he had always used it, "in my trunk at headquarters is a little package addressed to Helen—Miss Seymour. Will you give it to her for me?"

This time Reddy's grip made Ted wince. Words were quite beyond Reddy now, for there were two bitter aches in his heart: one was at the thought that the captain he adored might not come back; the other, almost the bitterer of the two, that he did not dare, he had no right, to send a farewell message to Miss Seymour.

"Good-by!" said Ted gruffly. He wrenched his hand free, turned, and stalked off toward his location. Reddy did not say good-by, and waited until Ted was turning the corner of the communication trench before he stalked after him.

On the first day of the fighting the Americans moved forward like clockwork, taking village after village and hill after hill and sending back to the rear prisoners by the thousand. Then they came up against that barbed-wire rampart, two and a half miles deep; and that network of concrete-lined, iron-roofed, camouflaged trenches; and those solid walls of steel and masonry; and those pitfalls lightly covered with earth; and those machine-gun nests artfully concealed—against every conceivable kind of defense—called the "Hindenburg Line" and deemed by the Germans impregnable.

After three days of slow, bitter, stubborn, heartbreaking struggle, much of it at night through an inky blackness, the Hindenburg Line was crossed and the Germans withdrew to the Kriemhilde Line, the last of those defenses they had vaunted as impregnable, and once across which our men could fight on more equal terms.

All through those early October days the fighting was furious; Prussian Guards and shock troops were hurled, in ever fresh divisions, against these young, untried Americans, and the American boys held firm. There

were attacks and counter attacks, and the lines swayed back and forth, but our men always recovered the lost ground and went forward a little farther. By October 4 the Americans were astride the Kriemhilde Line, but there were long days of fierce fighting yet ahead of them before the line would be theirs and the Argonne Forest cleared.

So far both Reddy and Ted had seemed to bear charmed lives. They had managed to keep near each other in the fighting, leading platoons that fought sometimes shoulder to shoulder, and they often had a chance for a word together. It was on one of these chance meetings, on that morning of October 4, that Ted told Reddy he had learned their division was to be relieved on the next day.

"Glad of it," said Reddy. "I 'm nearly all in." But he added quickly, "I hope we 'll take Two Hundred and Forty first. I 'll be disappointed if I 'm not in at its capture."

This was the most impregnable hill in the Argonnes and commanded the plateau west of the Meuse for miles. It had to be taken; but the German high command had sent the flower of its army to defend it—veterans of four years of war—and the hill was honeycombed with dugouts and trenches, terraced with emplacements for heavy guns, and sowed thick with machine-gun nests.

It was while waiting for the order to attack this formidable fortress that Ted had given Reddy his information. That was in the early morning. All day long the battle raged, the Americans dashing up the slope in face of torrents of machine-gun bullets and pounded by heavy artillery. It was like the battle of Round Top at Gettys-

burg—the bloodiest of the war. It was not until early evening that the last German gunner surrendered or fled over the top of the hill, and the hill was ours. But Reddy was not there to see it taken.

All day long he had fought like a tiger, routing machine-gun nests, sending back prisoners, accomplishing Herculean tasks. In the mid-afternoon Reddy and Ted's platoons saw a white flag waving from the crest of the hill and dashed joyously up its slope to receive the surrender.

It was a dastardly deed!—worthy of a nation that regards treaties as scraps of paper! Totally unprepared, bayonets not fixed, rifles not half loaded, the Americans received a murderous fire full in their faces at only a few rods' distance. There was nothing to do but retreat, recover themselves, and return to avenge the deed.

Reddy always hated retreating; he could never get over the feeling that it was cowardly, but in this case it would have been worse than foolish to do anything else, and he was swept back with his platoon. Half-way down the hill he discovered that Captain Jarvis was not with his troops. That murderous machine-gun fire was still raking the retreating troops mercilessly, but for Reddy there was no alternative: he must go back.

The slopes of the hill were dotted with the dead and dying. For one moment it flashed through Reddy's brain that Ted was dead; it was of no use to go back, and with no Captain Jarvis in the way might not Helen some day turn to him?

Reddy hated himself for harboring such a thought for even the millionth part of a second. And once having harbored it, he could not have been prevented from go-

He carried him as he would have carried a child

ing back after Ted if every rifle in the German army had been leveled at his heart. He found his captain lying with his face to the ground, whether dead or fainting he did not know and did not wait to find out. He picked him up and ran with him down the steep slopes of Hill 240.

It would have been a comparatively easy matter to sling him over his back and carry him thus, but Reddy would not. It would be exposing him to that deadly rain of bullets, and it would be making of him a shield for himself. Instead he picked him up in his arms and carried him as he would have carried a child, using his own broad back as a shield. It was an almost superhuman effort, but love and anguish gave him strength.

He never knew when the bullet struck him in the back, tearing its way through to his chest: he had but one thought, one determination—to get Captain Jarvis safe into the lines before his own strength should fail. He was dizzy and blind from loss of blood, but he stumbled on, and after what seemed to him years of dizzy staggering, slipping, sliding, almost falling but never letting go his clutch on his unconscious burden, he fell senseless inside the lines, still holding fast to his captain. They were both picked up for dead but they were rushed back to the C. C. S. and there Ted soon revived; he had only fainted from loss of blood from a deep flesh wound. But there was small hope for Reddy from the first.

As soon as the C. C. S. had done all they could for them they were sent back of the lines to the evacuation hospital, and there Ted soon recovered enough to be up and about, and to sit by Reddy's bed and wonder if the boy would never come out of that deathlike sleep.

Then one day Reddy opened his eyes, and the moment his glance fell on Ted his face flashed into a smile so full of love and ecstasy that Ted said to himself: "The doctors are wrong; he is going to get well."

"You are not dead!" Reddy cried joyously, but in a voice hardly more than a whisper. "Thank God!"

"No, Reddy," Ted answered, putting his hand on Reddy's and holding it close. "I 'm not dead, but I should have been but for you. How did you ever do it, boy?"

Reddy laughed a happy, weak little laugh.

"I don't know. You were a husky armful, all right! But what was the matter with you? Are n't you wounded?"

"Only a flesh wound that I am ashamed to speak of. Nothing was the matter with me except loss of blood, but that would have been my finish if you had n't got me where they could stop it up quick."

"I 'm glad," Reddy said simply. But he was more than glad, he was proud; he had saved Captain Jarvis for Miss Seymour!

For nearly two weeks Ted sat by Reddy's side every day and watched him grow slowly weaker while the great battle swept on, out of the Argonne Forest, beyond the Kriemhilde Line, and across the Meuse, leaving the two ardent young soldiers stranded in hospital.

Many long talks the two boys had together, though Ted did most of the talking; it tired Reddy to talk, Reddy, the ever glib of tongue. Ted grew stronger every day; they would be sending him back to a convalescent hospital soon, but not, he hoped, without Reddy. He had

refused to believe that Reddy would not get well, though he might have read the verdict in the doctor's and nurses' eyes, and in the fact that they let him spend so much time at Reddy's side, had he been willing to read it.

One day Reddy, who had always been so patient and uncomplaining, grew restless, turning from side to side and groaning a little.

"Is it so very bad, Reddy?" said Ted, with quick sympathy.

"Not too bad," said Reddy, looking up with his flashing smile, "but the groanin' seems to help a bit."

Ted, to beguile him from his pain, began to talk, as they had often talked before, of their experiences together and what they would do when they were once more back in the lines.

"Beyond the Meuse, beyond the trenches; then it will all be open fighting, Reddy," said Ted.

"Hurrah!" said Reddy feebly but joyfully. "We can beat them in an open fight, every time!"

"That we can, and we will!" said Ted confidently, and was struck dumb by an expression of pain passing swiftly over Reddy's face.

"What is it, boy?" he asked softly.

Reddy hesitated a moment and then he took Ted's hand and looked up into his face.

"I 'll not be there, Captain! I 'll never be in the front line again," he said steadily.

"Reddy!" cried Ted, half indignantly. And then full comprehension of Reddy's meaning, and full conviction that Reddy *knew*, swept over him. He cried again in sorrow and despair:

"Oh, Reddy!"

"You must not mind," said Reddy, and his voice was sweet and strong. "Sometimes I 'm glad."

"Glad!" Ted groaned, and covered his face with his hands, to hide its convulsive workings from Reddy.

"Yes," said Reddy, simply. "I 've thought about it a great deal, when you 've been talking about our being back in the fight together, and I wondered how I could tell you. I 've known it a long time."

Ted lifted his face and gazed at Reddy in wonder. Reddy answered his look.

"Of course I 'm sorry not to go back. I 'm sometimes afraid I liked the fighting for the fighting's sake . . . I 'm an Irishman, you know," with his old whimsical smile. "But I think we have them whipped; I think it will soon be over. And knowing that . . . I 'm ready to go, and glad."

"But oh, Reddy, how *can* you be glad!"

"I 've thought about it a lot. I think I 've done about the best thing with my life that I could. I 've given it for a great cause, Right and Freedom, and I might have spent it as I used to spend it, worse than uselessly."

He hesitated a moment before he went on again. Then he seemed to summon up all his courage:

"I want to tell you, Captain Jarvis, why I 'm glad. I 've had foolish dreams. I liked to think that some day I would be rich and have a fine position in the world, and then . . . I 'd dream about asking a woman to . . . to marry me . . . that would never look at the likes o' me. And I 've always known how weak and silly and foolish my dreams were, but . . . but . . . I don't think I 'd

like to go on living without them. And so . . . I 'm glad."

Two great tears were rolling down Ted's face, and he did not know it. He was looking at Reddy with a kind of awe. The boy had said it all so simply, so sweetly and so bravely, Ted would have liked to take him in his arms and hold him close, as a father might hold and comfort his little child. But he would not have dared, for it seemed to him that while Reddy had been talking some great and wonderful change had come over him. His face was as the face of a seraph, shining with a holy joy. Reddy lifted an arm, put it around Ted's neck, and drew his head down to him.

"When I 'm gone," he whispered in his ear, "tell her, and tell her that I died happy, and loving her."

For a long moment the two heads, the sunny red curls and the brown, lay close together. Then Reddy withdrew his arm from Ted's neck and pushed him gently away.

Ted lifted his head and cared not a whit that the tears were streaming down his face.

"Sha 'n't I send for her, boy?" he whispered brokenly.

Joy flashed into Reddy's face.

"Oh, could you?" he whispered ecstatically. But in a moment he shook his head.

"No, it 's better not," he said soberly. "I could never keep from telling her, I 'm afraid, and it would break my heart to have her laughing at me."

"She would never laugh!" said Ted. And he was sober enough himself. Who could help loving such a divine boy! No doubt Helen loved him! How could she help it!

Ted, looking at Reddy, saw his eyes fixed on something down the long ward and saw them filled with overwhelming surprise and joy.

Ted turned quickly. Down the long aisle between the two rows of cots, Helen was coming swiftly toward them. She glanced at Ted, but hardly seemed to see him. She knelt down by Reddy's cot, put her arms around him, and drew him toward her.

"Oh, Reddy boy," she said, in a voice full of quiet affection and strength, "why did n't you let me know you were hurt? I 've come now to nurse you and stay with you until you are well." And then she kissed him.

Reddy glanced up at Ted half frightened, as if to say, "Do you mind?" but looking so shyly proud and happy, too.

Ted smiled back at him, as if to say, "It 's all right, Reddy boy."

And Reddy nestled down into Helen's arms like a tired child on its mother's breast, closed his eyes, and fell asleep.

CHAPTER XXIV

OUR HERITAGE

Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,
And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
And we have come into our heritage.

—Rupert Brooke.

NOVEMBER 11, 1918—the world's *Dies Gloriæ*, as August 1, 1914, was its *Dies Iræ*—had passed with all its wild rejoicing, its sudden uplift of spirit, its great easing of millions of hearts whose crushing loads of anguish and anxiety had rolled swiftly away with the shriek of the sirens and the peal of the bells that proclaimed peace to the world.

Each of Reddy's friends, in his own place and in his own way, had received the wonderful tidings. Jim O'Hara and Fritz Swartz—Jim a corporal and Fritz a sergeant—in the last tense fighting in the lines before Metz, threw down their guns as eleven o'clock struck and rushed into each other's arms. Jim was pale and trembling, Fritz was all aglow.

"You stuck it out like a man, Jimmie boy!" said Fritz.

"Thank God!" breathed Jim, trembling as he said it. He was free from the awful dread that always haunted

him, the dread of proving himself again a coward. And then both together uttered the thought of their hearts:

"I wisht Reddy wuz here!"

In a convalescent hospital Ted, still hobbling a little and leaning on a stick, lifted his voice with all the other maimed and halt and blind, and shouted glad hurrahs. While in his heart he was saying, as Jim and Fritz had said, "If only Reddy were here!"

In the evacuation hospital, where Helen had held Reddy in her arms while he fell asleep, she was rejoicing with a full heart with all those dear fellows, none of them would ever have to go back into those terrible trenches, but some of whom, she sadly knew and they knew, would leave the evacuation hospital only for a narrow bed in the crowded graveyard behind the hospital. And in her heart she was saying, with Fritz, and Jimmie and Ted, "If it had only come six weeks earlier!"

It was more than a month later. In a balcony in Paris were sitting Helen and Ted and Jules, waiting for the arrival of the President, *their* president, come across the seas, thereby breaking all precedents, to help adjust the great questions that must arise in the settlement of a World Peace.

Ted was still pale and still limped a little; the loss of blood had been too great to recover from easily, and he would no doubt always bear with him that slight limp as a glorious badge of service. Because of it he had received his discharge and was going home in a few days. He had come up to Paris ostensibly to witness the arrival of the President, really to spend these last few days with Helen.

For Helen had received her discharge, also, and was

visiting a friend whose apartment most opportunely overlooked the avenue down which the President's cortège would pass. Helen's work, for these last weeks, had been in the evacuation hospital and since November 11 there had been no new wounded coming in, and those in the hospital had been rapidly evacuated until there had been no work left for her. She had applied for her discharge but had not yet secured her reservation for the home voyage.

Jules's division was among those who were later to join the army of occupation, but for the present they were in billets, awaiting the order to go forward. Jules had obtained leave to run up to Paris for the day to see the great event and was snugly ensconced in this delightful balcony with his two friends. It was a tiny balcony and for that reason Helen's hostess had put in it no other guests. The other balconies of her apartment were crowded with her Parisian and American friends, and she was, in this waiting interval, visiting from balcony to balcony, while reserving a seat for herself, for the great arrival, with Helen and her friends.

Helen was reading to the two young men the letters she had received the day before from Reddy's father and mother, in reply to hers written late in October. The mother's letter was a typical Irish lament for her "darling boy," but full of such genuine love and sorrow that one could not smile at its extravagances. The father's letter was brief, and the sorrow in it no less poignant because it was expressed with dignity:

My son has given his life for a great cause. His mother and I are deeply bereaved, but he has made the supreme sacrifice gloriously, and we are ennobled by his death. We will cherish

his decorations, which you have sent us, and if either of us is ever tempted to slip back from that high standard he has set us, we will look at these precious decorations and remember, and stand fast.

We shall hope to visit his grave in the beautiful hill country of France some day. Please convey our grateful thanks to Mademoiselle Marie, who, you say, has promised for love of our boy always to care for his grave.

To you, who first set his feet in the right way, and to his country, who furnished him so noble an incentive for great achievement, our hearts are full of gratitude.

As one who sorrows deeply and yet is sustained by a great and holy pride,

I am truly yours,
REDDY'S FATHER.

Jules cleared his throat and wiped the tears, of which he was not ashamed, from his eyes.

"My uncle writes like a man and a gentleman," he said. "I have never seen him, but I believe when I do I shall love him for Pierre's sake; I was very fond of my Cousin Pierre."

"In his death," said Ted soberly, "he has brought us 'Holiness, lacked so long.'"

"'And Love, and Pain.'" Helen finished the quotation softly.

Ted winced a litle. Ever since he had seen Reddy fall asleep in Helen's arms with Helen's kiss on his lips he had been very sure of the answer to that question he had asked himself so long: Did Helen love Reddy, or him?

Below them, in the imperial avenue, the mighty throng, thousands of them waiting since early morning to catch a glimpse of "the foremost man of the world," began to grow restless. The street was aglow with color. The

lancers in their rich uniforms, on white chargers, their lances erect like a forest of steel, lined both sides of the street, making impenetrable walls through which no enemy could reach the President. The Stars and Stripes and the tricolor of France waved indiscriminately side by side, from every window and in every hand. Snatches of song—"The Marseillaise," "The Star-Spangled Banner," "Joan of Arc," "The Long, Long Trail," —rose to their high balcony, and sometimes the three joined in the chorus, waving their banners as they sang.

Suddenly there was that indescribable stir in the multitude below them that betokened the long-awaited approach. There was the distant sound of cheering, bands playing the national airs, the rhythmic tread of soldiers' feet, the booming of great guns, all gradually growing nearer, until the air beneath them and about them was rent with acclamations, and two million men and women went wild at the sight of a man in conventional street dress, wearing the ugliest of headgear—a high silk hat—but so firm of jaw and so keen of eye, that no one who looked at him could fear that the great world issues at stake would not be safe in his hands.

Jules, who was not of the President's political party, had been criticizing, in the interval of waiting, the President's action, outside of all precedent, in leaving his country to come and sit at the peace table. Ted, who was not of the President's party either, had forborne to criticize, but neither had he defended him. Helen alone, being a woman and therefore of no party, had not had her vision clouded by party prejudices, and had spoken with warm approval of the wisdom of his course. But at sight of him, either his magnetic personality evidenced in

his glowing eyes and his cordial smiles and bows as he returned the greetings of the people, or, perhaps, the wild enthusiasm of the multitude itself, swept the two young men off their feet. They surrendered unconditionally to the power of the man, as they waved frantically and shouted themselves hoarse.

In a moment he had passed, with the other carriages following and long lines of soldiers in horizon blue or khaki marching on each side of them. Ted had not known that his own regiment was to be part of the President's escort until it came in view and he recognized his own company with two of its members wearing black bands on their sleeves.

Ted waved and shouted, and some sound of his voice must have carried above the din of the thronged street. The two boys glanced up and smiled; they would have saluted had they dared. But they dared to glance significantly down at their black bands and point to them, and Ted interpreted to Helen and Jules:

"Do you know what Jim and Fritz are saying?—'If Reddy were only here!' They are two boys Reddy absolutely saved from ruin and put on their feet; and for all I know there may have been many more of them."

"God bless him!" said Jules, fervently. "That 's the comfort of being a good Catholic: I can still pray for my friends when they are gone. I don't see what you Protestants do without the comfort of prayers for the dead."

"We leave our dead with God," said Helen, reverently.

Mrs. Van Ostend came rustling in to invite the two young men to stay to luncheon. Ted accepted, glad of

"We are seeing the dawn of a new day, Ted," said Helen

any excuse to stay with Helen, but her invitation reminded Jules that he must be off at once if he would catch his train back for billets.

Mrs. Van Ostend went back to her other friends and Ted and Helen still sat in the balcony, looking idly down at the moving masses below them—a vast concourse stirred by the great impulse of brotherly love for a distant nation who had come to their aid in their hour of need, and by their admiration of a man who had dared to enunciate those high principles that will always appeal to the hearts of men, and that yet so few statesmen have dared voice.

"We are seeing the dawn of a new day, Ted," said Helen. "You and Rupert Brooke have said it: our Dead have brought us 'Holiness, lacked so long.' "

"Yes," said Ted, "and if the President can have his way at the peace table, Honour will come back, as a king, to earth, and pay his subjects with a royal wage. It will not be revenge but punishment that will be meted out; and justice, and mercy."

"If we can only not forget," said Helen. "I 'm sometimes afraid that the lessons we 've been learning through these four terrible years will be forgotten as soon as peace and prosperity return; and we will slip back into our heedless, careless ways, intent only on pleasures and money-getting. And the 'Nobleness that walks in our ways again' will all be lost."

Ted was silent for a moment. When he spoke it was slowly and almost solemnly:

"I believe we can trust it to our Dead. They have poured out the 'red, sweet wine of youth' for a lofty ideal, and they will not let us forget. They will keep

holiness and honor and nobleness for us. If ever we are in danger of forgetting, they will remind us. No, I believe the New Day has dawned, and 'we have come into our heritage,' a heritage of love. Love is the most tremendous force in the world. Hate was the motive power of this awful war; love will heal its scars and set the world right."

Could this be Ted?—Ted with whom Helen had often been impatient because of his frivolity, and worse? He had spoken with such solemnity he had filled her with a kind of awe; she had no words to answer him with. Could Reddy's death have accomplished this? Had he, dying, given to Ted "rarer gifts than gold"? How Ted must have loved him! And how he must mourn him! Not once had she seen the light-hearted Ted of old: there had been an undercurrent of sadness in every look and every word ever since she had met him this morning; and it was the first time they had met since they had said good-by at Reddy's grave in the little village cemetery after the simple burial ceremonies.

"Dear Reddy!" she said softly, speaking to what she believed was in Ted's heart. "How every one who knew him loved him! And how we all miss him!"

"Yes," said Ted, and hesitated before he went on. "I 've wanted to tell you, Helen, only I did n't quite dare, how sorry I am for you. I know how terrible his loss has been to you and I 've wished so much that I could show you my sympathy and help you to bear it."

Helen looked at him wonderingly, and slowly the truth began to dawn.

"That is just the way I have felt for you, Ted," she said with rising color, "I have wished I could comfort

you. It has been a great sorrow to you, too; has n't it?"

"Yes," said Ted, still hesitating, "but it 's different, I suppose."

"I don't believe so. He was very dear to me, and perhaps because I had known him longer I may have loved him better. He was a dear younger brother to me. But the love you two bore each other, cemented in the trenches and on the battle-field, I think must have been almost greater."

Light was beginning to dawn on Ted, too.

"Was it only as a brother you loved him, Helen?" he asked with something of his old assurance, and a gleam of the old happiness in his mournful eyes.

"Of course," said Helen, trying to speak naturally, but not daring to meet Ted's eyes.

"Look up at me, Helen," said Ted masterfully.

She gave him a fleeting glance.

"Is it only as a brother you love me, too, Helen?" sternly.

She did not answer and he seized her hand and held it close.

"Helen, I'm going home next week. Will you marry me and go home with me?"

"Thank you," said Helen, doing her best to look at him and speak saucily. But as she met his ardent eyes all her foolish attempt at flippancy dropped from her like a discarded cloak.

"Oh, Ted!" she breathed.

"At last!" he whispered ecstatically; and since there was no one in the balcony, and no one who could see, he held her close for one wonderful moment.

As. Mrs. Van Ostend came rustling toward them once

more, Ted withdrew his arms. But before she appeared, beaming, in the open window, to beg their pardon for leaving them alone so long, he had time to say, earnestly and softly, under his breath:

"We have come into our heritage, Helen!"

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The novel deals with the time of the Louisiana Purchase, just one hundred years ago; and the negotiation of the treaty figures largely in the narrative. The hero is a young American of fine family, and the heroine, Dr. Saugrain's ward, is a bewitching, high-spirited daughter of the old noblesse of France. Distinguished historical characters abound in the story. President Thomas Jefferson, Lewis and Clarke, the most prominent families of old St. Louis, and the imposing figure of Black Hawk, the famous chief of the Sacs, are among the personages introduced; while across the ocean, Napoleon, Talleyrand, Marbois, and the leading men of the days of the First Consul play a notable part in the plot. Then there is the Chevalier Le Moyne, who supplies much of the excitement of the narrative. He is determined to win the charming Pelagie for himself, and, to secure his end and thwart his rival, does not hesitate to use Indian allies in America and his influence with Bonaparte in France. But the true lover and the dainty lady of his heart come to their own at last after many perils, and the romance ends happily, as all romances should. The rushing incident of the story carries these *dramatis personae* from St. Louis to France, then back again to St. Louis, where life a hundred years ago seems to have been full of merriment and adventure.

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THE CENTURY CO.

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